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The Duke of Diamonds; OR, THE FLOWER OF CALOUTTA.

A Story of Strange Lands and Seas.

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AUTHOR OF "THE RED RAJAH," "THE IRISH
CAPTAIN," "THE LOST CAPTAIN," ETC

CHAPTER I. 1857.

THE sun of India blazes above the brown jungle. The tiger crouches in the long surput grass; the buffalo hides in the pools and the elephant has retired to the thicket shade; but the city of Krishnapoor is all astir, like a hive of bees.

Pale, stern faces of English soldiers, exulting glances of Sikhs, and stolid indifference of

Ghoorkhas, show that mercy for a Hindoo is a thing unknown to-day. The rebellion has failed; woe to the conquered!

In the square of the market-place of Krishnapoor stands a brass nine-pounder, polished till it gleams like burnished gold. Neat and plain, handsome and serviceable, it braves criticism, a dandified death-dealer, a very Nero of guns.

The house-tops are crowded with people; a dense mass of humanity blocks up every avenue out of the square. All eyes are fixed on the solitary gun and its neat detachment of English artillerymen, two by the muzzle, two by the trunnions, two by the train.

The orderly bugle sounds a clear shrill note from a great white building at the side of the square, and all eyes turn thither.

Forth from the portals of this building comes a strange procession. In front a guard of swarthy Sikhs, dismounted, carrying razor-like *tulwars* sloping over their shoulders. Then two English soldiers with fixed bayonets, a prisoner between them; then more Sikhs, followed by a large staff of English officers, who mount at the foot of the steps and ride out into the

square, following a tall, heavy-built man, in diplomatic uniform, whom all recognize as "the Resident."

But it is not on him that the eyes of the populace are fixed. It is the prisoner who attracts their attention; and a low wail of grief goes up from thousands of throats as they see him advance.

A handsome man anywhere, he is positively magnificent now. Prisoner though he be, he looks as if he were lord of all around him.

He was so only a few days ago, for this is none other than the Rajah of Krishnapoor.

Prisoner or not, he is attired in robes of velvet, heavy with gold embroidery and sown with seed pearls, while the flash of jewels from his collar, the bracelets on his bare, muscular arms, the clasp of brilliants that supports the feather of his turban, would turn a Fifth avenue belle green with envy.

As proudly as if going to review his own troops, the deposed Rajah stalks into the midst of the silent square, straight up to the gun that has been standing idle so long, and takes his post before its muzzle.



"YOU OWE, MY SECRET IS SAFE WITH EFFIE AND THE CHILD, AND YOU ARE CHEATED. DOG, COWARD, LIAR; THAT IS MY ANSWER!"

Meantime the Resident holds up his hand to command silence, and an officer reads out the sentence of the Viceroy at Calcutta, that "the Rajah of Krishnapoor, for high crimes and misdemeanors, be deposed from his kingdom and blown from the cannon's mouth in the public square of Krishnapoor."

The doomed prince smiles bitterly as he hears the paper read, first in Hindoostanee, then in English, and still more bitterly curls his lip when the Resident asks in Hindoostanee:

"Prisoner, have you any cause to show why this sentence should not be executed at once?"

The Rajah laughs aloud as if in scorn as he answers, in good English, but strained and pedantic:

"Does my former secretary imagine that the Rajah of Krishnapoor will condescend to address epithets of appreciation or requests for the exercise of clemency to a person whom he has raised from a beggar's position? I am here. Had you not deceived me by pretended friendship you would never have entered my capital while a man was alive to defend it. You have belied me to the viceroy, for the sake of my wealth; but I have taken precautions, and all you will have is the worth of my garments. I am happy to give you the hangman's fee, my excellent friend."

Then turning fiercely on the English artillerymen, he cried:

"Load the gun! Will you keep me waiting all day?"

The Resident is ghastly pale while the prisoner speaks; but a covert smile is on the face of more than one staff officer as they hear the Hindoo prince, in his labored English, revile his executioner. The Resident makes a silent signal to the corporal of the gun, who immediately gives the word in a subdued tone, unlike the usual hoarse shout of a British non-commissioned officer:

"Load with powder! LOAD!"

Instantly the six statues round the nine-pounder start into vigorous life, rushing at the gun like madmen, brandishing rammers, running to and from the limber, till the flannel powder-bag is in its place behind a heavy double wad, and the men back in their old stations.

Then the corporal and sergeant, looking very pale, advance to the Rajah, who has drawn out a magnificent jeweled watch and is consulting it with apparent interest.

The prince remarks with the greatest suavity: "Sergeant, I am glad to see you. I am glad they put you here, for you will do your duty properly. Please do not hurt me with the cords more than necessary, and accept this watch as a trifle from me."

The sergeant grows paler than ever as he takes the watch and mutters with dry lips:

"God help your honor to glory!"

The Rajah turns to the corporal, still smiling.

"My friend, your detachment is not as quick as it should be. I have seen the artillerymen of my guard load in three seconds less time than you took. But then they had a Yankee for captain, and I am told that the Yankees can always beat you Englishmen. Is that—"

"TIE HIM UP!" interrupts the voice of the Resident, in a perfect shout. His face, lately so pale, is now purple with anger.

"Tie him up and blow him to pieces, the black traitor!"

There is a sort of shudder among the officers, as he speaks. They are not unused to these horrible executions, but there seems to be something about this which shocks even men who have followed the bloody track of Outram. More than one scowls openly at the Resident, who affects not to see it, and continues:

"Do your duty, sergeant, and turn in that watch to my head-clerk, after the execution. You understand?"

The Irish sergeant salutes stiffly, with a muttered:

"Yes, sir."

As for the Rajah, he only laughs, as carelessly as ever, as the two non-commissioned officers, not urgently, lead him to the muzzle of the piece and place him with his back against it, while they attach his arms, with long cords, to the cheeks of the gun-carriage.

The height of man and gun, the position in which he is secured, cause him to stand nearly erect, inclining a little back, his face turned directly to the Resident.

The time has come, and even the stolid artillerymen compress their lips in expectation of the terrible drama to be enacted. Only the doomed prince, of all the assemblage, looks as calm as if he were witnessing a play.

Then the Resident dismounts close to him and motions back the gun-detachment. The bystanders retire out of hearing, and the Resident says, in low, hurried tones:

"Reflect, Kalidasa. I can save you, now. Tell me the secret, and I will see your sentence commuted."

The Rajah laughs aloud.

"Why, you are a greater fool than I thought. You cur, my secret is safe with Effie and the child, and you are cheated. Dog, coward, liar; that is the end of you."

It is the last wild defiance of impotence against injustice, and even the Resident feels the insult through all his armor of greed.

He starts back and raises his hand as if to strike, but desists in very shame before an audible hiss from the officers.

Then he motions forward the gun-party, and steps aside, watching the doomed prince with malignant satisfaction.

The corporal takes the linstock in hand, trembling like a leaf, and all fall back behind the axle of the carriage.

The Rajah looks proudly before him, and cries aloud, in English:

"Soldiers, your chief is a cowardly assassin and thief, who—"

"Fire!" almost shrieks the Resident.

The corporal lowers the port-fire on the priming.

And then—

The Bishop of Calcutta enlarged his diocese that year by sending a new missionary to Krishnapoor to convert the Pagan Hindoos to the religion of love and forgiveness.

CHAPTER II.

1877.

BRIGHT shines the sun over the sparkling waves of the Arabian Sea, through which the stanch ship Benares, of the P. & O. S. S. Co's line* is plowing her steady, old-fashioned way. The Benares plied from Bombay to Suez when first the P. & O. S. S. Co. had a local habitation and a name, and she continues her voyage up the Mediterranean ever since M. de Lesseps has opened a way for her through the isthmus.

Under the striped-awning of the quarter-deck, scattered about on camp-chairs, with abundance of fans, are the passengers, a few ladies returning from India, with a number of furloughed officers and one or two civilians.

Quite a large group of men, with two of the ship's officers, are gathered in an admiring circle around two ladies in the coolest part of the quarter-deck. The ladies are Anglo-Indians; one can see that at a glance. There is a languidly insolent air about them that only belongs to the Englishwoman in India, with her fifty black servants, more or less. The nearest approach to this peculiar air of which Americans are capable might have been seen in a rich New Orleans Creole, thirty years ago, under the slavery regime.

The oldest of the ladies now in question is of uncertain age. She owns to twenty-five, and has quite forgotten her birthday, though her hair is still as brown as ever, banged and frizzed into the latest style of "lunatic fringe," while her manners (when not addressing an inferior) are kittenish in the extreme.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is the Honorable Lorelia Lawton, sister to the distinguished Sir Lumley Lawton, whose services in India have lately been rewarded with a baronetcy—though Sir Lumley did not care for the honor; his elder brother, Lord Loughborough, being childless and consumptive.

The young lady by her side, pale and beautiful as a Greek statue, is her niece, only daughter of Sir Lumley, and the toast of half the messes in India, as the "Flower of Calcutta."

"Helen, my love," begins aunt Lorelia, in her kittenish way, "I really must protest against these afternoon levees on such fearfully hot days. We are expected to hold our own against these wicked men, who are practicing witty sayings all the morning, when we've hardly strength to speak at all—*Fan harder, pig. Are you asleep?*"

The last words are not in English, but delivered in Hindoostanee with much energy to the patient black *punkah-wallah* behind her. Like many other Anglo-Indian ladies, the Honorable Lorelia keeps her Hindoostanee for abusive purposes, and knows very little of the language but how to scold.

The young lady by her side smiles in a languid, weary manner.

"Why not let them talk, aunty? It amuses them, you know."

There is a listlessly insolent air about Helen Lawton that comes of too much petting and flattery; for she has been accustomed, ever since she was fifteen, to look on men, especially officers, as a sort of upper servants for her whims. She is not a bad girl by any means, for she is naturally kind and gentle, but the gentlest may be spoiled by irresponsible power.

"Ah, Miss Helen, could ye be as cruel as that?" says a rich oleaginous voice. "Amuses us! And haven't I been trying for two mortal hours to amuse your beautiful self?"

The Honorable Lorelia strikes in with her usual uneasy giggle.

"Why, Captain O'Shea! And I thought you were trying to please me."

"And why not?" asked the Irishman, a stout, jolly-looking personage in the braided frock of an officer of the Control Department (once Commissariat). "Sure I'm like the highwayman in the play, Miss Lawton, that could be happy with either."

* Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company's Line, running from England to Bombay via Suez.

"Go away, you horrid immoral man. There's no believing you Irishmen, any more than the French. You're all the same deceiving set."

"Ah, now, Miss Lawton, don't be classin' us with the French and all other foreigners. We're nearer to ye than the Yankees, anyway, and ye don't abuse them."

"Because they say something when they speak, Captain O'Shea," remarks the younger lady in her usual tone of languid disdain; and there is a general laugh at O'Shea's expense, in which all join but a tall young fellow, who is sitting on a stool at Miss Helen's feet.

This youth has a keen, handsome face, with those clear-cut, rather sharp features, which would stamp him anywhere for an American.

O'Shea reddens perceptibly through his sun-burnt mask, and seems a little at a loss for a reply. It is the American himself, of whom the stout officer has always been jealous, who comes to his rescue with the quiet retort:

"Thanks for the compliment. But we can hardly call anything good which is rude. Captain O'Shea has one fault common to all Irishmen: he is too good-natured to shine in pure sarcasm."

As he speaks, he rises from his lowly seat and moves away forward among the crew, saying to the Irishman as he passes:

"Come and have a cheroot, captain."

The Hon. Lorelia giggles with great delight as the two stroll forward, though her niece's face had flushed violently. The elder lady is too fond of admiration not to enjoy seeing her beautiful relative snubbed.

The two gentlemen are soon amicably engaged in burning the fragrant incense of the American weed, rolled into the form of cheroots, near the port paddle-box. O'Shea, who has been disposed to dislike the American, on the truly military ground that he is not one of "Ours," has been completely conquered by the behavior of the latter.

"It's lovely weather we have, Mr. Hart," he remarks, as a signal of amity.

Clarence Hart casts a glance seaward.

"We shall have a change soon, and a bad one at that," he answers, gravely.

He had struck his match, and was looking out over the port quarter toward the south-east as he spoke.

O'Shea's eyes, following his, saw on the horizon a small bank of cloud that looked like distant land.

"Did you never see such a cloud as that before, Captain O'Shea?" asked Hart, as he lighted his cheroot.

"Bedad, and why not?" was the counter-question. "Clouds are common enough, on me conscience."

"Then look up there," rejoined Hart, pointing up beside the mizzen-topsail-yard, where a little white speck of vapor began to be visible.

"Did you ever see a cloud like that?"

O'Shea cocked his eye at it.

"It's growing, by the powers," he remarked, in a tone of interest. "We'll have a little shade from this blackguard of a sun."

"More than we wish," replied Hart, gravely. "You're a landsman, O'Shea, or you'd know what that means. We'll have a typhoon on us before sunset, or I never saw one."

As he spoke, O'Shea became aware that there was a commotion on deck. The officers came forward quietly, but rapidly, with grave faces, and the crew bustled about, while a number of men went aloft and began to send down the light yards.

CHAPTER III.

THE TYPHOON.

IN less than two minutes the speck of cloud O'Shea had seen by the mizzen-topsail-yard had grown into a black mass of vapor, with dull coppery reflections along its upper edge, extending from the zenith almost to the bank that had first arisen on the horizon.

Besides this, the cloud-bank on the south-eastern horizon was rising steadily, like a chain of black and blue mountains with snow-clad peaks, behind which incessant red flashes and the roll of thunder showed that a terrible storm was raging.

Even the lady passengers began to see there was something coming to mar the pleasures of the passage, though the captain and officers put on cheerful faces and made their preparations silently.

The first intimation they had of the coming peril was when the men began to strip off the quarter-deck awning, and the steward to carry the camp-chairs down below.

The Hon. Lorelia saw the latter functionary displace her favorite lap-dog with a curt, "Beg pardon, my lady," and vanish down the companionway, whereupon she arose in great indignation, calling to her Indian butler:

"Kitmuggar! Kitmuggar! Bring back that chair instantly, for poor Flossy! Do you hear?"

But, to her surprise, the Hindoo had vanished; and not only that, but a couple of sailors had carried off her own and her niece's seats in the first moment of her indignation, so that the quarter-deck was empty of chairs; while the captain was calling out some unintelligible orders to the crew, and the mates were hurrying

about with grave faces, swearing at the men in a way that denoted suppressed excitement.

"What does this mean? Are they all going mad, Helen?" asked the fair Lorelia of her niece, who was looking on at the bustle by her side with a pale face.

Helen Lawton pointed to the huge black cloud, which had now united with that on the horizon, and spread like a pall over three-fourths of the heavens.

"I'm afraid we're going to have a storm, aunt," she said, in a low, frightened voice. "I heard the captain say something about a typhoon to Mr. McShane, though he didn't intend me to hear."

The Hon. Lorelia turned as pale as her niece under her rouge.

"A typhoon!" she whispered. "Oh, heavens! Helen, we shall all be drowned."

At that moment a vivid flash of lightning came from the cloud above them, ran down the conductors on the foremast, which seemed for a moment to be all ablaze with intense blue light; then vanished in darkness, made more terrible by a deafening crash of thunder.

The Hon. Lorelia shrieked dismayingly, while Helen Lawton staggered and would have fallen, had not the American, who was coming aft with O'Shea, caught her in his arms.

The Irish captain might possibly have passed by, leaving his younger comrade to do the part of a squire of dames; but the dismayed Lorelia, with all the impulsive eagerness of sixteen, rushed into his arms in a violent fit of hysterics.

Helen Lawton had fainted away in dead earnest, but her aunt made up for her silence by a succession of the most violent screams, nearly strangling the stalwart captain as she clung round his neck, and imploring him to "Save me! Save me!"

And just when her screams were loudest, came several bright flashes, followed by deafening peals of thunder; as the rain, in one broad, gray sheet, poured down like a cataract.

Clarence Hart had seen it coming, and had already borne his fair burden below, consigning her to the care of the stewardess; but the Hon. Lorelia's hysterics were cut short in a strangled shriek, as the water came down. O'Shea, with a few muttered words that sounded very much like profanity, helped her to the companion hatch, and saw her down-stairs, after which he returned on deck, to find the ship plowing ahead, still in a dead calm, through a dense sheet of rain that hid all the horizon, the air as gloomy as if it were night, and no sound save the rush of the cloudy cataract.

But this was not to last long.

A moment later, the lightning and thunder recommenced, and soon became incessant, while gusts of wind, alternately cold and hot, struck the ship from opposite quarters with the suddenness of aerial trip-hammers.

Then they heard a loud, roaring sound, louder than even the thunder, and down on the port quarter came the full fury of the typhoon, blowing a hundred and fifty miles an hour, cutting the tops of the waves off as with a knife, and filling the air with the sharp, stinging spray of the "spindrift."

It struck the ship, stripped though she was, and made a clean sweep of all three masts at once, with its first effort, while the O'Shea found himself thrown headlong across the deck into the lee-scuppers, where at least twenty sailors and officers were already wallowing.

For several minutes the typhoon howled over the ship from stern to bows; then lulled for about twenty seconds; when, *crash!* came a fiercer blast than ever on the starboard beam.

First it was south, then north; now east, anon west; till the wind had boxed the compass in every point along the zigzag path of the typhoon. Now the sea rose and came tearing down on the devoted vessel in great green mountains.

O'Shea, who had crawled up under the shelter of the stern rail, heard the captain yell out some order to the man at the wheel, just as a towering green monster came sweeping down on the port paddle-box.

The ship's head swerved round to meet the wave, but too late to prevent mischief. The captain himself was on the bridge, between the boxes, and the soldier saw him throw up his hands as if in a momentary access of despair.

Then the wave struck the paddle-box; there was a sound of crashing wood; a cloud of white foam. The ship quivered from stem to stern as the engines went whirling round unchecked by any resistance; then she swept round in a circle, like a wild duck with a broken wing; while wave after wave poured in upon her, buffeting her from port to starboard with a succession of heavy blows, in the midst of which came the crashing of wood, resolving itself into splinters.

Thoroughly dismayed, the stout soldier stared wildly before him, and saw that the sea had made a clean breach of both paddle-boxes, wrecking the paddles completely and bending the stout iron bars of the wheels as if they had been mere wires. The captain had vanished, and not a man save himself seemed to be left on deck, while the sea to leeward was covered with pieces of wreck, token of how the remorseless waves had swept the Benares from stem to stern.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DIAMOND DUKE.

THE Arabian shore of the Persian Gulf is low and marshy, the districts of El Aksha and Oman being notoriously unhealthy. The people are much darker than their neighbors of the interior highlands of Nedjed, and get their living by fishing and the slave trade, when not working in the rice-fields.

The little town of Tuat, low and mud-walled, with a single mosque, and not more than a thousand inhabitants, became one of the principal depôts of the slave trade after the Imam of Muscat made his renowned treaty with England, by which the trade was supposed to be abolished in his dominions.

The English cruisers had made matters on the coast of Africa pretty hot for the slavers, but a few dhows succeeded in running the blockade every year, and these made the best of their way to El Katif and Tuat, knowing that English ships rarely went beyond Muscat or into the Gulf. A single gunboat of the East Indian navy, cruising around Bushire on the Persian coast, is the only vestige of law and order in those seas; and the British Resident at Bushire never interferes with the opposite coast.

But, Tuat is something besides a slave depôt. It lies behind the famous island of Bahrein, the home of the pearl-fishery, and every Arab on the coast, from El Katif to Muscat, is a keen judge of pearls. In fact, the pearls are the prime cause of the slave trade, for the divers are all negroes, forced to risk their lives against the sharks, whether they like it or not.

When we come to Tuat it is late in June, and the fishing season has set in in full vigor. The little town lies scorching in the sun on its black mud flat, and the port is full of boats, putting out and coming in from Bahrein, just in sight at the other side of the sound.

But, outside of the little dirty Arab craft that ply to and fro, lies at anchor a vessel of very different appearance, with a trim neatness about her that tells of civilization.

Not very high in the water, for one might easily climb into her waist from a row-boat by stepping into the main chains, she is yet far larger than the biggest of the pearl-boats and dhows that are scattered about. A Yankee ship-master would judge her as "about three hundred and fifty tons, old measurement; nearer four hundred, new style;" and would as unhesitatingly call her a yacht.

No trading-vessel ever had such a gloss to her dark brown paint, like mahogany, or such a bright gold streak running from bow to stern. No trader ever kept her decks so white and clean, or her masts stayed so truly.

But this yacht, if yacht she be, has a look about her decidedly Oriental, for her rig is that of the Arab or Mediterranean "lateener;" with short sturdy masts, raking forward, and tapering yards of enormous length, rising in the air as high as the masts of an ordinary schooner. The sails are furled snugly away, however, with a care and neatness that no Oriental vessel ever displayed, and contradict the presumption raised by the rest of the rig.

A few sailors, grouped on the forecabin or busied around the brass-work of the yacht, polishing up in man-of-war style, while they work like Europeans, are as decidedly natives of these tropical seas; swarthy Arabs; supple Hindoos; active little Malays; all dressed in uniform of Moslem cut, turbaned, jacketed and baggy-breeched, with bare feet, their sashes full of weapons; a most truculent-looking crew for a yacht, though silent and orderly as so many man-of-war's-men.

The vessel has no guns visible, but there are several neat teakwood brass-bound cases, ranged at intervals along the bulwarks, inside, that have a strange appearance, being about the size of an ordinary gun, without any carriage, and placed opposite the ports. What these cases may be and what they contain, in our days of portable Gatlings and Hotchkiss guns, is problematical; but the yacht has withal the look of a craft that can take care of herself, even among the slave-hunters and other rascally cut-throats of the coasts of El Aksha and Oman.

The deck of the vessel is flush or level, the quarter-deck not being raised above the rest, and the cabin being down-stairs.

Pacing to and fro near the stern rail, with a keen eye on the crew, to see that they do their work, strides a tall, thin, bony man, with broad angular shoulders and a sharp eager face. His eyes are of that greenish hazel, with yellow specks, that betoken keen sight; and his beard is of that intense blue-black that only accompanies the Persian method of dyeing with henna and indigo.* At the sides it is scanty and thin, but grows heavily on mouth and chin, and is

*Turks and Persians almost universally dye their beards, performing the operation openly and taking several days to perfect it. First they use a decoction of henna, the same with which harem beauties stain the tips of their fingers. This turns the beard a bright brickdust red, in which state the hair remains several days, the owner not seeming to take any shame from the looks of his face. The dyeing is then completed with indigo, which confers a lustrous blue-black that lasts some time.

trimmed to a point, which lies on his breast, and which he frequently strokes caressingly.

This personage wears a brilliant uniform of scarlet and green, with the buttons of the House of Braganza; and the ensign which droops lazily from the flagstaff at the stern of the yacht bears the colors of Portugal.

He seems to talk any of a dozen Oriental languages, for his sharp, stern voice addresses each of the seamen in his own tongue, though perhaps equally ill in all, for what the reader can tell.

Still, Portuguese appears to be the official language of the yacht, for it is in Portuguese that he snaps out his last order.

"Call all hands to receive His Grace, the Duke of Diamantina; and pipe the boats for shore."

Instantly a great black-bearded giant, the silver anchor on whose sleeve proclaims him to be the boatswain, sounds his shrill whistle in true man-of-war style, when up the hatchways come tumbling fifty or sixty men, who range themselves in regular order and stand looking toward the cabin.

Presently a head is seen rising above the brass rail and a young man comes up on deck and touches his hat in answer to the salutes of the crew.

Whatever may be the attire of the rest of the ship's company, this young man might pass muster in dress and manner in any part of the world for a rich yacht-owner. His dark blue suit, fitting irreproachably, white vest and slippers, broad hat of Guayaquil grass, are all so studiously plain that they show the master of dress among his gaudily-clad dependents.

Neither uniform, weapons, nor jewels mark the young Duke of Diamantina; owner of half the diamonds in the world (according to report) and spending money like water. Plain gold studs and a slender watch-chain are the only traces of ornament about him, and there is nothing to distract attention from his handsome face and figure.

Both of these are of remarkable symmetry. He is above the medium height, and his frame looks slight and agile, though there is a depth of chest about it, such as we find when we look closer at the Apollo Belvidere. His face is of that dark aquiline character we expect to find in southern races, with magnificent eyes, thin curling lips, intensely black hair and mustache, setting off splendid teeth when he smiles, as he does now to the officer in uniform.

"Well, Dom Gil," he says, in a tone of languid approval, "you have brought these cubs into shape at last I see. I am satisfied now that we can go to Calcutta without being ashamed of the vessel."

The keen-looking officer with the black beard looks critically at the men and answers:

"I think they will do, after awhile, your grace, though it's a good deal of trouble to get them to stop their talking. Will your grace take the long-boat or the gig?"

"The long-boat. I think I shall go to Bahrein to-day," replies the duke. "Have you heard whether they have found any specially large pearls, Dom Gil?"

"One of the pearl-boats came in this morning with the joy-song, your grace, and, when I asked, they told me that Haroun the Wahabee had brought the largest find of fifty years."

The duke displayed his white teeth, as his lip curled in a gentle smile.

"Send the men to their berths," he said, quietly. "Haroun the Wahabee is very obliging to save me a hot row in the sun. Send for him to my cabin."

Dom Gil bowed, and the duke returned to his cabin, the pleasantest and coolest retreat imaginable on that blazing day.

A strong current of air came in through the stern windows and traveled up the wind-sail, cooled as it went by a fine spray of perfumed water, thrown across each window of the yacht by a self-acting atomizer. The furniture was all that taste and comfort could desire and luxury purchase, cool silk cushions, ebony and silver couches seated with cane network, books, pictures, statuettes, trophies of arms.

The duke threw himself down on a silk-covered divan, smooth and cool, by the stern window, and looked lazily out to sea. The tide had swung the yacht's stern out in that direction and brought into the midst of his field of vision a large slave dhow, slowly gliding into the port of Tuat under a faint breeze from the south.

She was crowded with negroes, who had been shaken up out of their confined position during the voyage, now that there was no further danger of their escape, and the slavers were busy knocking off their irons.

The duke looked at them with a slight expression of disgust. He had often seen slave dhows before, and the breeze brought from this one a sickening effluvia. He clapped his hands and a little black boy entered the room with his master's long hookah which the duke began to smoke in self-defense. He was not used to disagreeable things and the presence of this horrible slave dhow annoyed him greatly.

It glided slowly on, coming nearer and nearer the yacht, and at last the Brazilian nobleman

could stand it no longer. With an impatient sigh, much at variance with his usual imperturbable demeanor, he laid down his pipe, and said sharply to the black boy:

"Go up and tell Dom Gil Grabador to make those people go to leeward or else sink them."

The boy vanished.

To Dom Gil and all on board, the duke's word was law and gospel combined. Without a moment's hesitation the tall officer hailed the slave dhow in bad Arabic:

"Take your vile carcasses to leeward, sons of unwashed mothers, or I'll sink you."

As he spoke, and as if by magic, the men on the watch whipped off one of the brass-bound cases that stood inside the bulwarks of the yacht, and up went a bright steel mitrailleur, hinged on a long bar, so that it just peeped over the top of the rail and presented its circle of gleaming barrels at the slave dhow.

The effect was immediate. There was a confusion of unintelligible yells and Arabic orders, in the midst of which the dhow altered her course and took her vile odors out of the weather-gage of the yacht. Not, however, before she had drifted within a hundred yards.

The Duke of Diamantina, lazily smoking his hookah, saw the wild confusion on board as she sheered off; and a moment later two white figures shot over the side of the slaver and plunged into the water with a splash.

The duke half arose and saw two heads emerge from the water and come swimming toward the yacht. He knew they must be those of escaping slaves, but the white bodies particularly arrested his attention.

Then the Arabs on the slaver opened fire with their long muskets at the two fugitives, and the duke frowned slightly. Turning to the waiting black boy, he said, as quietly as usual:

"Tell Dom Gil to stop their firing."

This time the boy grinned as he vanished. The message suited him.

A moment later, the powerful tones of Dom Gil shouted, in the same inelegant but forcible Arabic which the slavers seemed to understand so well before:

"Stop shooting, pigs; or we shoot too. Keep your slaves tight after this."

There was an immediate cessation of firing on board the dhow, though the reis began to shout out all kinds of remonstrances against robbing a man of his property; but in the meantime the two swimmers reached the side of the yacht, grappled a rope thrown them by one of the sailors at a signal from Dom Gil, and were hauled on board, two white men, one red-bearded and burly, the other slender and blonde.

They were both stripped of clothes, and covered with raw patches where the skin had cracked under exposure to the sun, so that, altogether, they presented a pitiable appearance.

Dom Gil came to meet them, and his usual harp, stern face melted into lines expressing a certain grim kindness as he asked:

"Ingleez, you s'all be, eh? I spik ze Ingleez lak native. Vere from, you s'all come?"

The red-bearded man grinned in answer as he said in broad Irish:

"Faith, and we shall come home as soon as we can get there. Is it where we came from? Out of the say, be the powers. Wrecked in a typhoon, and picked up off a raft by the slavers, worse luck! I'm Captain Thaddeus O'Shea, of Her Majesty's Department of Army Control, and this is my friend, Mr. Hart, of America."

Dom Gil turned and looked at the younger man with interest.

"Americano you s'all be, aha? Ve s'all be brozairs. Ve s'all be all of America here, o Duque del Diamantina an'all. Is'all be Dom Gil Grabador, Commandante of de Naves Braziliانو. Don't you are feel cold? You s'all be have close, and s'all see o duque. Hola, Antonio Senas!"

He called the steward and gave him some rapid directions in Portuguese, when the man beckoned them forward and took them into the store-room of the yacht, down the main hatch, which they found supplied with clothes of all descriptions and nationalities.

While they were being hospitably entertained, Dom Gil went down to the cabin and respectfully saluted the duke, who asked in his usual quiet manner:

"Well, Dom Gil?"

"They are refugees from a wreck, *mi sefior*; one Irish, the other an American. The Irishman is an officer of the English staff, the other a civilian. I have sent them to be dressed. Will you see them?"

"Are you sure neither is English?" asked the duke, slowly.

"I can tell an Englishman, like a snake, by his tongue. Neither is English."

"Then let them come in."

Dom Gil bowed and left the cabin, which he soon reentered, leading O'Shea and Hart. The duke rose from his lounge with easy politeness and advanced to meet his guests, saying, in English of the utmost purity, and in a soft, low voice, with only a slight foreign accent:

"Gentlemen, I am rejoiced to become the means of your deliverance from those rascals of

slave-hunters. Be pleased to consider this vessel and all in it as yours to command."

Then he stopped, for O'Shea was staring at him as if he had seen a ghost. The jaw of the Irishman had dropped, and his eyes were fixed and glassy, while he trembled as if he would fall.

"Is the gentleman sick?" asked the Duke of Diamantina.

CHAPTER V.

AN UNPROTECTED FEMALE.

It was not without reason that the Duke asked O'Shea whether he was ill, for the captain seemed in imminent danger of a fit. Dom Gil and Clarence Hart supported him on either side, while the Brazilian nobleman, with the coolness that marked his every motion, poured out a glass of sherbet and held it to his lips, saying:

"Lay the senhor down, Dom Gil. Perhaps he is sunstruck."

They were leading him to the lounge, when O'Shea stopped and stiffened up; then trembled again, and asked Dom Gil breathlessly:

"For the love o' God, darlin', who's that? Don't lie to me! Who is he?"

"Dat is Senhor Dom Afonso Vasco Vasquez, Conde del Rio Bravo, Marquez del Pombal, and Duque del Diamantina," answered Dom Gil, in his most imposing manner.

"And he's not a ghost? A real true flesh-and-blood man?" asked O'Shea, in the same breathless way.

Here the duke smiled.

"Here is my hand, senhor, to feel if I am flesh and blood."

As he spoke he grasped the hand of the stout Irishman with such a sudden and powerful gripe that his small slim hands seemed to be made of steel wire; and the pain brought O'Shea to his senses more effectually than any other thing could have done.

"Yer honor's alive," he answered, in the tones of a soldier addressing an officer.

Then he hesitated a moment and asked in a more collected way:

"Was your grace ever in India?"

"I am a Brazilian," answered the duke, calmly. "I have been in Goa, but we have not visited your parts yet."

O'Shea nodded his head and muttered:

"It can't be. I must have dreamed."

Then he bowed and apologized.

"I beg pardon, your grace, but maybe it's the sun made me rude. Those murderin' devils of slavers stripped us and left us in the sun till we were nigh dead. I'm thankful your grace was here, or maybe we'd be dead by this."

The Duke of Diamantina smiled in his quiet, unimpassioned way, and turned the conversation by speaking to Clarence Hart.

"You are an American, senhor. I am rejoiced to see you, for we Brazilians are great friends of your people. Should I be impertinent were I to ask how you came in this plight?"

"Not at all, your grace. Our story is soon told. Captain O'Shea and myself were passengers from Bombay on the steamer Benares, an old paddle-wheel tub, that ought to have been condemned long ago. We were caught in a typhoon and the ship foundered, after the captain and officers had been swept overboard. Luckily for me, I owned a Boyton suit; and, thanks to that, I helped O'Shea and two of the lady passengers off to a raft we made out of the wreck of the ship's spars. Next day we were picked up by that slaver, whose people at once put us in irons and placed the ladies in their cabin. They are still there, to be sold as slaves, I presume, after they land."

No sooner had he finished than the duke turned to Dom Gil, saying:

"Go to the slaver at once, and buy the two women they have on board. Pay whatever they ask. We are very fortunate if they have not gone already."

Clarence began to thank the duke earnestly for his kindness, but Diamantina waved his hand in a slighting manner.

"My dear sir, it is nothing. We must not allow ladies to be sold for a Moslem harem. Besides, it may be well to wait for thanks till we have them safe on board. I know these Arabs, and they are a very tricky race. One is never certain of them. Be quick, Dom Gil, and come back with the ladies as soon as you can."

Dom Gil left the cabin while he was speaking, and they heard the dash of oars almost immediately after, showing that the first officer of the yacht was on his way to the slaver.

The duke clapped his hands and said some words in Portuguese to the black boy, who ran out and returned almost immediately with the steward, carrying a table ready set with all the luxuries of a tropical climate, accompanied by ices that made O'Shea's mouth water, as the duke said:

"Your fare on the slaver was in all probability not what you are accustomed to, gentlemen. May I hope you will take lunch with me, and honor my little boat by taking up your quarters here?"

"Faith, and I'll own we're nearly starving,

your grace," replied the Irishman, frankly. "I'd not be refusing lunch any time, and now I could eat raw beef."

"Then fall to, gentlemen," answered their host, with his usual gentle courtesy, and they were not slow to obey the invitation.

As they were slowly consuming the ices with which the luxurious repast concluded, Clarence observed:

"We hardly expected to find ices on the coast of Arabia."

"And yet you have them on the Bombay steamers and at Calcutta," answered the duke, quietly.

"Yes, but the ice comes in ships from America, and is very dear."

"My dear sir, it is nothing but a question of a little trouble. I have my private provision-ship that follows me at intervals, and keeps me supplied. Just now she is at Ismalia, loading with ice. It takes about a ton a day to keep the yacht cool in summer. You notice the temperature of the cabin. It is kept at seventy degrees of your Fahrenheit thermometer, though it be more than a hundred outdoors, by means of my ice-spray. I will show you, if you will permit."

He pointed out to them, over the frame of each window, a bracket, which held a large silver vase, from the foot of which a fine spray, almost invisible, was floating down across the window.

"You have seen those little toys they call atomizers in the pharmacias—the apothecary's? That is the whole secret of this cool air. The vases contain ice and sea-water, and it is perfumed before it descends. It evaporates rapidly, and you feel the result. Will you smoke, gentlemen? I have the hookah if you prefer, or the cigar."

"Oh, give me a cigar, for the love o' God. None of yer hookahs for me, bad luck to 'em. They're too much like India," said O'Shea, bluffly. He seemed to be getting over his fear of the Duke of Diamantina. The latter eyed him with his usual bland calmness.

"You do not seem to like India very much, senhor?"

"Bedad, and I don't, duke. 'Tis a good country to rob, and a better to leave with the plunder."

"My dear sir," smiled the other, handing him a richly-chased silver jar full of the finest Havanas, "that has been the logic of three thousand years of conquest in the world. The robber who carries off his plunder can spend it and come back for more, but he who sits down over his loot in India is apt to lose it to one stronger than he."

O'Shea cackled over his cigar as he lighted it. He could not enter into the soarings of philosophy, but he was an old East Indian and he had never smoked such a cigar before.

"Where do ye get these cigars?" he asked, curiously, snuffing the aroma of the dark tobacco.

"My dear sir, I grow them. My steward keeps the accounts of one estate I have in the Vuelta Abajo, in Cuba, and they come from there."

Clarence Hart had been looking out of the stern windows while they were chatting thus idly, and saw the white gig of the yacht coming back with Dom Gil Grabador in the stern-sheets, but only accompanied by a single figure in female attire, closely veiled.

In some agitation he turned to his host, saying:

"Dom Gil is coming back, but only with one. Can he have failed?"

"My dear sir," was the sublimely quiet reply, "my people never fail. You shall have your lady friends, unless they are killed before we find them, and even then their remains shall be turned over to your care."

Clarence was silenced by the absolute faith this man seemed to have in his own powers to accomplish anything, and he waited till the Brazilian officer entered the cabin, leading with him the unknown female, who struck an attitude as soon as she came in, threw back her veil, and fell at the feet of the duke, crying:

"My brave preserver! Heaven bless you for saving an innocent maiden's honor from the ruffian grasp of the infidel Arabs."

Clarence could not avoid turning away to conceal a smile, for it was none other than the Hon. Lorelia, painted in true Oriental fashion, her eyes made large and languishing by touching the lids with black antimony, her hair ornamented with gold coins hanging over her forehead, her slender and rather angular figure concealed by Oriental kaftan, sash and petticoat-trowsers. It was the Hon. Lorelia Lawton, transmogrified by the arts of the slave-trader to present the most captivating appearance of which she was capable, to attract the eye of a purchaser.

O'Shea, who was behind her, grinned at Dom Gil, and the iron features of the Brazilian officer softened into a responsive look; but the exquisite courtesy of the Duke of Diamantina never failed him, and he raised the fair Lorelia from the carpet with his usual calm blandness, telling her:

"Be of good cheer, madame. I am only too

happy to be of any use to a lady of your condition. Pray be seated, and excuse me, while I question my steward a moment."

His voice was calm, his manner as frigid as that of Lorelia was ardent, and the honorable maiden took her seat, rather chopfallen.

"Where are the others, Dom Gil?" asked the duke, in Portuguese.

"The slavers say they will not sell them till you have paid the price for the escaping men. They would only let me have the old woman."

It was lucky for the sensitiveness of the Hon. Miss Lawton that she did not understand a word of Portuguese.

The duke looked annoyed.

"Did you not then pay for them?"

"I hardly dared, *mi senhor*. They asked fifty thousand piastres for each, and twice as much for the women."

The Duke of Diamantina looked coldly at his major-domo.

"Dom Gil," he said, icily, "I have never known you to hesitate about an order before. Get me these people, if they have not gone. While you are waiting, they may send them off to Fyzoul Abdallah."

Dom Gil flushed to his temples as he bowed in answer to his employer, and the duke turned away to Clarence saying, in English:

"I fear I must trouble my honored guests to come on deck for a little while. These rascals are impudent at times and will not give up a valuable prisoner without a full bargain. Madame, permit me."

CHAPTER VI.

LORELIA'S WATCH.

He offered his arm to the Hon. Lorelia, who accepted it with simpering eagerness, and the whole party ascended to the quarter-deck, where they found an awning spread and a shower of fine icy spray already filling the air from pumps set in motion as soon as the duke set his foot on the bottom step of the stairs.

"Dear me, duke; you have the very perfection of luxury here," remarked Miss Lawton, as she sunk into a camp-chair in the midst of this cooling spray. "It seems to me that I could live here forever, were I in your position."

The duke smiled in his usual cool indifferent way.

"I try to make my friends pleased with their reception, madame. I am glad the yacht meets your wishes."

Even while he was speaking, his eyes were roaming toward the shore, where the slave dhow was now beached in the mud, while her cargo of blacks was being quickly discharged, surrounded by a mob of purchasers, intent on good bargains. Outside this crowd they could see a troop of camels, about thirty in number, whereof several were equipped with the broad-winged and curtained litters in which the harem women of rich Arabs are accustomed to ride.

The duke looked keenly at these, and compressed his lips slightly as he noticed that they were moving off across the mud flat of Tuat toward the highlands, by way of the beaten track to Dereeyah.

While he was looking, Dom Gil's boat was nearing the slave dhow, and another boat—one of the common Arab craft—approached the yacht itself.

The Hon. Lorelia was full of romantic delight at the picture round her.

"I have longed above all things to see Arabia," she declared; "and this is just too awfully nice for anything. Look at those camels, with their funny saddles, like big butterflies. What in the world are they, duke?"

"I fear, madame," rejoined the duke, gravely, "that one of those camels is carrying off your friend to visit Fyzoul Abdallah, in Dereeyah."

"And who is Fyzoul Abdallah?" asked Lorelia, innocently.

"He is the Sultan of Dereeyah, the capital of the Wahabees, madame. The Wahabees, as you are no doubt aware, are the most fanatical of Moslems; and a Christian in their hands is pretty certain to be killed if a man; kept in a harem for life, if a woman."

The Hon. Miss Lawton began to look frightened, as she ejaculated:

"And will they put Helen in a harem, duke? Shall we never see her again?"

"Not if I can help it, madame, and I think I can, not being quite unknown here. Pardon me one moment. I see a person coming on business."

He bowed and went forward to the main gangway, where a little dried-up Arab, meanly dressed, was bowing with a profusion of Oriental compliments at his good fortune in beholding the "Golden Prince of all Riches, the illustrious Lord from the West who had deigned to send for Haroun al Wahabi, to buy of him the Pearl of all Pearls."

The duke cut short his compliments by saying coldly:

"Show me the pearl. If I have none larger I will take it."

Haroun the Wahabee hesitated.

"Can I not show it to the Great Lord of all Jewels in private?"

The duke beckoned him apart from the rest, and the Arab produced from a bundle of rags in the recesses of his garments a handsome pearl, of the drop shape so much admired in ear-rings. The duke inspected it quietly and returned it.

"It is a good one, but I have better. Bring me a match for it, and I will take them. Whose camels are those going to Dereeyah?"

The Arab was so taken by surprise by the sudden change of subject that he unguardedly answered:

"Mine, great lord."

"How much does Fyzoul Abdallah offer for the white woman?" asked the duke, in the same listless way, as if not much interested in the reply.

This time the Arab screwed up his wizen face and replied, more guardedly:

"Does the Lord of Jewels wish to buy her himself?"

The duke frowned at him, and the frown transformed his countenance from the lazy grace of Antinous to the pitiless sternness of the Apollo.

"If I wish to take her I will but speak a word and kill every man in Tuat ere he can draw his sword. Answer my question."

Haroun cringed in awe before this imperturbable man, for he knew that the duke spoke the truth. The mitrailleurs of the yacht could have exterminated every living being in Tuat inside of half an hour. The wily Arab sought to make his peace and a good bargain at once by hastening to say:

"I meant no offense, great lord; but the Sultan of Dereeyah gave me a commission to find him a white girl, young and handsome, more than a year ago. If I give her up, now I have her, I shall be killed by Fyzoul Abdallah's spies, unless I leave Arabia forever."

The duke nodded gravely.

"I see. Then you must leave it. I will give you enough to take you away. Name your price to Dom Gil, and he will pay you when the girl is delivered."

He returned to the quarter-deck and looked out to shore. The loaded camels were moving rapidly off toward the mountains, and Dom Gil's boat was lying on the muddy beach, while that energetic officer himself could be seen hurrying to and fro among the Arabs on the shore, as if full of business.

Haroun the Wahabee scrambled into his boat and was rowed to shore, while the duke returned to the quarter-deck and looked at his watch.

He stood near the Hon. Lorelia, who was making eyes as usual at the nearest available man—in this case O'Shea—and the sharp eyes of the lady noticed the simplicity of the timepiece, a plain gold case.

Full of vanity, she began to lament the fact that her own watch had been injured during her adventures in the water, and inquired:

"Is it not safe to say that your grace, amidst so much luxury, keeps a watchmaker and jeweler in his train?"

"I believe so, madame," was the quietly-courteous reply; but the duke did not seem to be particularly interested in the matter of Lorelia's timepiece.

"I should be desolated, as the French say, if it were spoiled," remarked the Hon. Lorelia, pulling out a magnificent watch incrustated with diamonds. "It was a present from my brother, Sir Lumley Lawton, when he was made Governor of Krishnapoor after the mutiny. You remember the mutiny, duke?"

Clarence Hart, who had been quietly watching the Hon. Lorelia and O'Shea with some amusement, had noticed that the sunburnt face of the soldier always assumed an expression strongly akin to hatred when the lady consulted her watch, which she did about a hundred times a day. It was a very handsome toy, of French make, a repeater and stop-watch in one, with so many diamonds on the case that it flashed like a single jewel when taken out; and it was a matter of wonder to him how the fair Lorelia had managed to hide it from the slaver's people. The lady was proud of it with good reason and very fond of displaying it.

This time he watched O'Shea to see if the captain would show his usual emotion, but noticed that the Irishman had his eyes fixed on the Duke of Diamantina while Lorelia was speaking.

The Brazilian nobleman, on his part, was still looking out toward the shore, and only pretending to listen to the British maiden of uncertain age and kittenish manners.

"Tell me, duke; did you ever see such a watch as this?" continued Lorelia, piqued at his calmness and holding up the watch.

The duke turned his eyes full on her with a serious sweetness that disarmed her.

"Pardon my inattention, madame, but I was thinking of your friends in danger. I fear we shall have to follow them to Dereeyah."

"But we shall get them back?" asked the lady, inquiringly.

"We shall, madame."

"Then look at my watch and tell me what you think of it," she continued.

The duke took the toy in his hands with indifferent courtesy and looked at it closely, watch-

ed as closely himself by O'Shea and Hart. He returned it with a bow.

"It is very nice, madame," said the Duke of Diamantina, frigidly, and O'Shea gave a deep sigh and muttered to himself:

"It can't be he. It can't."

But Clarence Hart, keener by nature and education than the honest Irish soldier, noticed that as the duke turned away he gave one flash of his dark eyes at the unconscious Lorelia, and in that moment his face seemed to be transformed to the likeness of Satan, king of the fallen angels!

But his mien was unruffled and his voice as cool as might be imagined of an animated icicle, as he remarked to Clarence:

"My dear sir, I am truly sorry for your friends, but I see the camels are far on their way to Dereeyah. I doubt if Haroun can overtake them in time. We must follow ourselves. Can you ride a camel?"

CHAPTER VII.

CLARENCE HART'S STORY.

CLARENCE was somewhat surprised at the last question of the duke.

"I suppose I could if I tried. I have done a little of everything in my life."

The duke took him to one side of the quarter-deck.

"Pardon the question, my dear sir, but I am interested in your face and nationality. Will you tell me how you, an American, come into these seas? I owe much to your nation; and if, as I fancy, you are free, I have a proposition to make to you that may meet your views."

Clarence smiled good-humoredly.

"There is but little to tell your grace. My name is Clarence Hart, educated as a physician in Boston, but coming to sea in the navy as soon as I had taken my degree. I went to China in the frigate Mobile four years ago, got tired and resigned my post after two years, and have since been wandering through the East Indies, hunting for a relative of mine who disappeared from Boston before my mother was married. He was her favorite brother and she has never forgotten him."

The duke seemed interested.

"And this relative—your uncle—what makes you think him in the East?"

"The last my mother heard of him he was in the service of an Indian prince, the Rajah of Krishnapoor. His name was Gilbert Carver, and I have traced him so far under the Hindoo name of Gilkarvah. He was a tall, thin man with sandy hair, but must be gray now, for he was twenty years old when I was born."

"And you think he is living still?" said the duke, softly.

"I hope so, your grace, for my mother's sake," was the reply; "but I sometimes fear I shall never find him. I have heard by accident, from Captain O'Shea yonder, that the rajah, his master, was executed, under circumstances of the most—"

He stopped and gazed in some alarm at the duke, whose countenance had become marble pale, while the hand which still rested on Clarence's shoulder clutched it like a vise.

"Is your grace ill?" he asked.

"It is nothing. I am subject to spasms of the heart," replied the other, hastily. "Do not notice it, but go on."

His hand relaxed, and his features resumed their wonted serenity as Clarence pursued:

"O'Shea, it seems, commanded the gun detachment that killed the poor prince, who gave him some present in his last moments. I don't know what it was; but O'Shea seems to be very bitter over the fact that it was taken from him by his superiors. From something he let drop, I fancy it may be that very watch Miss Lawton showed us just now."

"You are right," assented the duke, hastily.

"That is, your conjecture is probably correct. Pray go on, Senhor Hart."

"That is nearly all, your grace. I set out from Bombay in the Benares, desponding of ever seeing my lost uncle; and, while there, I met O'Shea and the Lawtons, and we were wrecked, as you know."

"Senhor, I thank you for your confidence and will not abuse it," said the duke, with the stately politeness of a Brazilian noble, the most polished people alive.

Clarence hesitated, and a moment later asked wistfully:

"Does your grace think that I have any chance of finding my uncle Gilbert? You know these lands well. Is there any chance?"

"My dear sir," was the kind reply, and the Brazilian's face fairly beamed with gracious softness, "good sons like you will always find their reward. Who knows? You may see your uncle sooner than you expect. Is your father yet living?"

Clarence sighed.

"Alas, no. My mother has been a widow ten years."

The duke pressed his hand warmly.

"We are alike in that, too. I am fatherless, for twenty long, long years. Come, senhor, to my proposition. Dom Gil Grabador is my manager, my captain of yacht, my steward of rents, my factotum; but Dom Gil has not what you call

education, save of the world. I am indolent, I; and I need a secretary and confidant who can write my letters and be my friend. Will you take the position and name your own salary? That is all."

Clarence noticed that the duke's English took on quaint foreign idioms when he talked earnestly, and he felt so much surprised by the proposition that he hesitated.

The Brazilian noticed his embarrassment, and said, kindly:

"Think over it, my dear sir, and give me an answer at your leisure. I see Dom Gil is coming back to report that he has engaged camels. A very energetic man is Dom Gil. You will like him. He has been in the United States, even in Boston, I believe. Who did you say was this lady in the slaver, Senhor Hart?"

It was the first time the duke had asked a direct question as to the name of any of his guests, his delicate and ultra-Portuguese courtesy having kept his lips sealed before.

"Miss Helen, daughter of Sir Lumley Lawton, Governor of Calcutta."

The duke hummed a low note.

"So, Sir Lumley has a daughter? She is handsome?"

"Beautiful as an angel," replied Clarence, enthusiastically.

The duke looked at him keenly.

"My dear sir, there are beautiful women everywhere. These English are not for Americans to love. Be warned by me, and keep to your own race. The Hindoos are right. Caste should never be confused."

Clarence colored as he retorted:

"English and Americans are one race, your grace."

The duke shrugged his shoulders with a slight grimace.

"My dear sir, I never argue. Here is Dom Gil coming on board."

In fact at that moment the tall officer returned and made a stiff military salute to his superior, while he gave in his concise and clear report.

"The old slave merchant has taken off the woman to Dereeyah, and I have engaged camels to follow at once. We can take the gun-saddles and enough men along to be safe, and start in an hour. Will your grace stay or go?"

Clarence understood nothing of the rapid Portuguese beyond an occasional word, but the duke remarked in English:

"Our Dom Gil is an invaluable man, Mr. Hart. He has repaired an excusable fault by prompt diligence. I will go, Dom Gil. In the meantime, let me introduce to you the Senhor Clarence Hart, from Boston, who is hunting the world over to find his uncle, Gilbert Carver, of the same place. Now, my dear friend, consult with Dom Gil as to the proposition I made you, while I go to my cabin to dress for our journey."

He bowed politely, never seeming to notice that Dom Gil was looking at Hart in a manner showing great astonishment, and then crossed over to where the fair Lorelia had pinned O'Shea into a corner, where she was exercising all her wiles upon him.

"Do you think, madame," he asked, "that you could be content in these poor quarters for a few days? If so, I will ask you to make the yacht your home while we are away. Captain O'Shea, you, I believe, have been in the artillery. I will ask you to remain in the yacht while I go after your other friend, Miss Lawton. Please take charge of the defense, in case any of these Arab rascals think to impose on you, while I am away with the men. You understand the Gatling mitrailleuse, senhor?"

"I do that, your grace," was the hearty reply.

"How many men will ye have?"

"Not more than a dozen, senhor. I shall want all the rest to cow Fyzoul Abdallah."

"And how many Gatlings?"

"Three. One for each flank, and one for the stern and bow."

O'Shea nodded his head, well satisfied.

"Bedad, that's enough to bate off any quantity of the black devils. I'll stay, yer hon—I mane, yer grace."

Clarence noted that the duke, in speaking to O'Shea, took a curt military tone, and that the Irishman seemed to forget, at times, that he was no longer in the ranks, his expressions being less those of an officer than a common soldier.

The duke was turning away, when the Hon. Lorelia, looking horrified, made bold to interpose.

"Surely your grace does not intend to leave me alone in this boat?"

The Brazilian bowed with the utmost suavity.

"It is a choice, dear madame, between the yacht and shore. If you do not like better to return among the Arabs, I should say, stay here. I hold my position among these ruffians only by terror. They would sack the yacht in one hour, were it not for my mitrailleuses. I cannot take you with me, for we shall probably have to fight our way back, and shall not want any ladies with us but those with whom it is a choice between death among the Arabs or peril with us. You, madame, are safe, here."

With that, he ran down into the cabin, where

he was heard calling to his servants, while Dom Gil gave some orders in Portuguese, in consequence of which the yacht was soon a scene of bustle from stem to stern.

Men ran up and down the hatches, snatched the cases off the dozen or more Gatlings with which the yacht was armed, and lugged out a number of gaudily decorated camel saddles from the hold.

For about twenty minutes all was seeming hurry and disorder, though in truth each man was running to his place; and at the end of that time a flotilla of shore boats moved off from the yacht, carrying a large part of her crew and great heaps of baggage; while the Duke of Diamantina, accompanied by Dom Gil Grabador and Clarence Hart, sat in the graceful white gig and skimmed rapidly past the other boats.

Clarence could not help agreeing with the duke's eulogy of Dom Gil. That person was indeed a man of wonderful energy. He had engaged every camel in Tuat and sent forward a horseman to bid for forage on the road, had hired guides and scouts in profusion, and had the whole caravan ready to start in less than an hour from the time they had left the yacht's deck.

They were a sufficiently formidable array and armed with all the latest improvements in weapons of precision, while eight bright gleaming mitrailleuses gleamed from the camel saddles at intervals along the column, where donkeys and other beasts of burden alternated with men on foot. The duke himself, no longer in his simple dark-blue yachting suit, was mounted on a swift dromedary, covered with magnificent housings, and seemed to Clarence for the first time to deserve the title of the "Diamond Duke." His costume was that of an Oriental cavalier, with pointed steel helmet, mail-coat, turban, heron-plumes, jacket and full trowsers, high enameled boots, all of his dress gleaming with jewels, while the handle of his sword and the butts of his pistols and carbine fairly blazed with brilliants.

He looked as if he had set himself up on high, taunting the covetous Arabs with his wealth, and daring them to take it if they could.

Dom Gil, on another dromedary, went trotting around the caravan, as busy and anxious as a hen with a new brood, getting everything into shape for their journey. Since the duke had spoken to him of Clarence, he had kept near the young man, as if to protect him, occasionally making suggestions and giving advice, in his quaint Portuguese-English, which Hart found it convenient to adopt.

Now at last they were clear of Tuat, and stretching out over the mud flat toward the mountains, when Dom Gil pulled up his camel by the duke's side and said in a low tone:

"The Sultan of Dereeyah has had spies on the yacht for a month, and we shall have a fight to get out of the city; though they have determined to let us in peaceably."

The duke answered, tranquilly:

"So much the worse for them."

CHAPTER VIII.

FYZOUL ABDALLAH.

FYZOUL ABDALLAH, Sultan of the Wahabee kingdom of Dereeyah, whose name is a terror from Oman to the Djowf, was watching his horses exercise in the park, when his favorite slave, Seyd, brought him a letter from Nubar al Hayzari, (the left-handed) his prime minister, which caused him to smile in a peculiarly evil fashion and remark piously:

"God is Most Great and the Infidels are in our hands."

Fyzoul Abdallah was a tall and well-made man, with keen, regular features and coal-black beard, and yet the general impression made by his appearance was always repulsive and fear-inspiring to strangers. There was a certain length and obliquity to his half-closed eyes, a cruel, sensual curl to his red, voluptuous lips, that told of the irresponsible despot, given to debauchery.

Yet Fyzoul Abdallah was known through all Arabia as a Wahabee of Wahabees, as strict in his devotions and fastings, purifications and prayers, as a Puritan in the days of Cromwell. The Wahabees have always been the fanatical Puritans of Moslemism; and Fyzoul Abdallah gained his power and popularity by being stricter than any of his predecessors.

He was the originator of the renowned Stick Committee, composed of the most sedate and sober elders of the city of Dereeyah, whose business it is to patrol the streets while the faithful are at prayer in the mosque, and to punish any one found outside during prayer time.

The Stick Committee put down all dissent in Dereeyah by the simple process of beating the offender within an inch of his life; and never a villain in all the city but would run like a hare when he saw the white beards of the Stick Committee turn the corner, coming toward him.

Fyzoul Abdallah had abolished the wearing of gold and silver in his city, and silk was only permitted to men of piety—what our Methodists would call "professing" members of the church.

Wine was never heard of in public, though some of the graceless sinners in neighboring

towns hinted that there were private wine-cellars in Dereeyah, even under Fyzoul Abdallah's castle.

In short, the city was the worthy capital of Wahabeeism; for never a laugh was heard in its streets from morning to night, and the sound of prayer was incessant. Every face was grave, every eye downcast, as if at a perpetual revival meeting.

Fyzoul Abdallah, nevertheless, had an undeniably villainous grin on his face as he read Nubar al Hayzari's letter. He was a very holy man; but he had an unfortunate expression.

"Allah has given this infidel fool into our hands, Seyd," he observed, to the black, whom he allowed much license. "It seems that Haroun, the pearl-dealer, has decoyed him hither after a white girl slave that is on the way."

"She is here," interrupted Seyd, showing his white teeth. "The camels were inside the palace gate, and the white girl had taken off her veil, the bold hussy! when I saw her."

"Indeed?" asked the king.

"Yes, dread lord; and the elders of the stick soon made her put up the veil again. She looked pale and sick, I suppose with the heat; but they soon beat her into submission."

Fyzoul Abdallah grinned again.

"It is well not to give women much head, Seyd. A stick for the ass and the woman are never out of place."

The face of the black was more openly villainous than that of his master, and the pair looked as they were, a blot on the face of one of the fairest scenes in Nature.

The interior Highlands of Arabia, under their native title of El Nedjed (The High), are still more deserving of the appellation given them by the old geographers, Arabia Felix, Happy Arabia; or, as Pope puts it: "Araby the Blest." With an elevation such as to temper the heat; abundance of little lakes formed by depressions in the mountains; a soil teeming with fertility, the whole face of the country is covered with walled towns, small and great, where the people maintain to-day the same civilization which their ancestors taught Europe.

To those who are accustomed to associate sandy deserts, ragged Bedouins, flocks of camels and predatory tribes with the name of Arab, a visit to the provinces of Yemama, Dereeyah and the Djowf would be like a revelation of fairyland. The only trouble about the visit lies in the fierce fanaticism of the Wahabees, who suspect all Europeans to be spies.

Shut out by their own jealousy from foreign influence and compelled to depend entirely on their own resources, the high-bred Arabs of the pure old stock remain as they were in the days of the Crusades, glorying in their lineage, and calling themselves *Arab el Arabah*, "Arabs of the Arabs."

Dereeyah is in the richest part of the Nedjed, a walled city of fifty thousand people, rebuilt since its destruction by Ibrahim Pasha in 1818; full of handsome houses and gardens, and almost hidden from view by the mass of palms, figs, walnuts and olives that surround it on all sides. The sparkle of innumerable waters shows where the brooks are compelled to wind in and out in their artificial channels to irrigate the fields of cotton, sorghum, maize, wheat and barley; while the air is heavy with the perfume of roses, jasmines, and innumerable spice groves.

Fyzoul Abdallah's summer palace stands on a precipitous bluff that commands most of the city, and is a large and imposing though gloomy building, built in the twelfth century for a castle, and never much changed.

Below the castle, on the side away from the city, stretch the king's park and stables, and here Fyzoul Abdallah keeps his crowning glory of glories, his horses.

Sanctimonious scoundrel though he be, the King of Dereeyah can defy the whole world to show such horses as these. The glory of Epsom and Monmouth Park, the kings of the turf in England and Kentucky, cannot compete with the swift beauties of Fyzoul Abdallah's stud. There are fine horses among the Bedouins of the Euphrates, handsome chargers in the Djowf; but the pure Arabian of Nedjed is above all, and cannot be purchased for money. Successful war or a present of ceremony to a distinguished person may draw one of these beauties at long intervals from its native home, but no foreigner has ever been able to obtain more than one at a time, so jealous are the Arabs of the preservation of this matchless breed in their own hands.

While Fyzoul Abdallah was talking in his usual familiar manner to black Seyd, the grooms were taking the whole of his stud to water, some four or five hundred stallions and mares, gray, bay and chestnut, the latter colors predominating; and a racing jockey would have been ready to kneel down and worship every one of the slim, spirited creatures that cantered by, tossing their pointed muzzles to and fro, snorting and shaking their long silky manes, looking at their master with their soft dark eyes, and neighing a greeting as they passed. Such horses would fetch enough at auction in New York to bankrupt Vanderbilt.

But, while we are ecstasizing over the horses—forgive us, for we love a beautiful horse—Fyzoul Abdallah is reading over his letter again and chuckling immensely at the news it contains. It reads:

"Father of the faithful Wahabees; the Christian lord they call the Jeweled Prince is within sight of Dereeyah, and has sent Haroun, the Pearl-Dealer as his ambassador to ask an audience to ransom the white girl who has just arrived. He has a numerous company with him, but they are not white devils. I have given him permission to come into the city and we will quarter him in the court below the old palace, where we can pick his bones when he is asleep."

The king was so much pleased with the last sentence that he read it over aloud to Seyd, remarking:

"Nubar Al Hayzari is a wise man. This Lord of the Jewels has been spying round our coasts long enough. Now he has run his head into the lion's mouth, and we will see if he gets out so easily. Have you seen his caravan, Seyd?"

"No, dread lord; but Haroun's people say that they have enough guns to arm all our guards."

Fyzoul Abdallah smiled his most evil smile, as he observed:

"Guns are no use to sleepers, and if they never wake we shall have the weapons—eh, Seyd?"

Seyd laughed heartily in the shrill, unnatural tones of his class, and the king turned away to walk back to his summer castle; when his eye was caught by the glitter of arms at the outskirts of his own park coming directly toward the castle.

"Who is it dares come in, that way?" he angrily asked Seyd.

The black stared that way, as much amazed as his master. He knew that the watering pools lay there and that access to the royal stud from that direction was a matter punishable with death. There, however, plain and unmistakable in the sun was the glitter of arms; and a crowd of camels and men on horseback could be seen rapidly advancing over the undulating green park, while the whole of Fyzoul's stud, huddled into a confused mob, was galloping away from before the advancing caravan.

The king stamped his foot with fury, and his countenance lowered till it looked perfectly diabolical. He snapped his fingers at Seyd, and the black understood the signal, for he ran off to the palace, whence a groom galloped out a moment later, leading a caparisoned Arab horse, which he gave to the king.

Full of anger at the audacious intrusion, Fyzoul Abdallah called to his horse, and away it went like an arrow from the bow, as swift and almost as smooth, bearing the king up to the front of the incoming caravan.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DUKE'S VISIT.

FYZOUL ABDALLAH was unarmed. It had not occurred to him that he was in any sort of danger in his own capital, and his guards ought to be within easy call. When he halted in front of the caravan, therefore, it was with the tone of an absolute and angry despot that he shouted:

"Stop, sons of burnt fathers! How dare ye enter my park? Back, all of you, if you don't want to be made food for crows!"

To his intense surprise and incredulous amazement, the people in the caravan kept right on as if they had not heard him; and the wings on each side rode past him and lapped in behind, when he found himself surrounded by a circle of armed men, and confronted by a glittering figure on a white dromedary, that he at once recognized from previous description as the "Lord of all Jewels," the Arabic *sobriquet* for the Duke of Diamantina.

It was the duke himself, with his habitual slight smile and lazy courtesy, who addressed the king in good Arabic, marked with the Cairene accent, as Fyzoul Abdallah perceived.

"All the world has heard of the glory and riches of Sultan Fyzoul, whose name is the terror of Arabia. I have come all the way from the other side of the earth to behold him, and I am happy at last."

Fyzoul's face underwent several changes of expression while the duke was speaking, for he began to realize that he was, for the time being, in the power of this singular man. But he was too much a master of dissimulation not to end with a smooth countenance and the remark:

"My brother is very welcome. We have heard of the jewels of my brother, and the reality exceeds the tale. My brother must come to my house, that we may eat salt together."

Diamantina smiled and waved his hand.

"Be it so. I have brought a few little humble presents for my brother, which I will show him when we are home."

This intelligence delighted the king, who was of all things avaricious, and he turned his

horse and rode back to the palace as good-humoredly as if he had never been angry, and dismounted at the gate, where he cordially welcomed in the duke and his retinue.

"But how comes it, my brother," he asked, as they stood there, "that you came this way instead of by the city as I had ordered?"

His tone was peculiar, and now menacing as he said this; but Diamantina looked straight into his eyes, as he answered:

"Because I am a king myself, in my own land, and I have never asked the Padishah himself for an audience. I take no words from ministers; I talk to my brother kings face to face."

The glance of Fyzoul fell before his, and the Arabian looked uneasily round him. The fact was he was almost alone in his palace, servants and guards having gone down with the minister, Nubar al Hayzari, into the city, on purpose to decoy the duke and his escort into a trap of some sort.

Even while he was talking, he could hear the bustle made by their hasty return, and in the meantime he was absolutely in the power of this imposing stranger.

The duke seemed not uninclined to make him feel this, for he continued:

"My brother received a white slave to-day, stolen from her own and my people, by Haroun, the pearl-dealer. I hope that my brother will allow me to give a ransom for her."

Fyzoul waved his hand, loftily.

"We will see, we will see. I have a fancy for a white wife, who is not a Georgian or Circassian."

"Nevertheless," remarked the duke, tranquilly, "my brother will sell her to me. Sultan Fyzoul knows what are jewels. I will give him this saber for the girl."

The king's eyes glittered with avarice as he looked at the saber the other took from a slave and showed him, for the hilt and scabbard were of gold, and blazed with diamonds, emeralds, and rubies.

"That were indeed a present fit for one king to give another," he remarked, in his most oily manner, but Diamantina only smiled his usual quiet and unruffled smile, as he waved the slave back with the saber.

"In my land, kings never give arms to their friends. We have a saying that a sharp blade cuts friendship. I have a robe of honor for my brother, but my arms are for barter for goods that my brother has."

He had taken his seat unbidden, on the divan by the king's side, at the upper end of the hall, and Dom Gil, with Clarence Hart and some thirty men of the yacht's crew, all armed to the teeth, were grouped near by in the hall when Nubar al Hayzari, pale and breathless, entered the hall in haste, followed by a crowd of excited Arabs, with naked swords in their hands, and stopped in mute astonishment at the sight.

The duke sat close to Fyzoul, and never deigned to turn his head as the Arabs entered. He knew, from his guide, that firearms were scarce in the city, owing to the isolation of the Nedjed, and he could trust to Dom Gil not to allow him to be surprised.

"My brother is a great king and he will send for the white woman," remarked the Duke of Diamantina, in his most quiet tones; but the quick ear of Fyzoul Abdallah caught the click of pistol-locks all round him, as the Brazilian's retinue edged in closer round him.

Two great drops of sweat rolled down the king's forehead, and he answered, in a constrained tone:

"Be it as you will. Tell Nubar al Hayzari, and he will obey the order."

Diamantina beckoned to his little black slave, who handed him a piece of paper, covered with Arabic words, together with an ink-horn of true Arabian fashion.

"My brother's signet on this order will bring the slave," he said, quietly, "and the saber is his."

For a moment Fyzoul Abdallah looked round like a hunted animal seeking a way to escape, but met only stern, impassive faces, and hands thrust into broad sashes on pistol butts.

Then he gave a heavy sigh and took off his signet ring, with which he stamped the paper, after a hasty perusal. It was an order, ready written, calling for the slave just purchased of Haroun, the pearl-merchant.

The duke handed it to Dom Gil, who at once stalked over to where Nubar and the guards, completely dumbfounded, stood hesitating whether to fight or not. The long lanky Brazilian waved the paper before him and spoke aloud:

"Put up your swords. I have an order from Sultan Fyzoul."

The sound of their master's name had a magical effect on the Arabs, for Nubar bowed his face to the earth immediately and the guards sheathed their swords in silence as Dom Gil continued:

"My master, the king of Jewels, has come to visit his brother, the king of Dereeyah. My master's men will guard the king while they are talking over a treaty between their kingdoms. In the meantime conduct me where this order tells you."

Nubar al Hayzari placed his hands on his head in token of obedience and preceded Dom Gil from the room, while the duke turned to the king and resumed their interrupted conversation as if at home on his yacht.

"My brother is very kind to me, and I should like much to see his horses. Will Sultan Fyzoul give orders to have them displayed?"

The king eagerly assented, for he was proud of his stud and longed to be on horseback once more. He flattered himself they could not trap him a second time.

The duke made no objection as the king rose and went out of the castle, when he called to his grooms to bring out the horses; and as for Clarence Hart, the American could not keep back a cry of delight and wonder as the beautiful creatures were trotted out for inspection.

Fyzoul Abdallah noticed it and an evil smile crossed his face as he asked the duke whether his friend "would not like to try one of the horses."

Clarence, when the words were interpreted to him, positively trembled with eagerness, but Diamantina laid his hand softly on the young man's shoulder as he said in English:

"My dear sir, do not think of it. We have a delicate game to play, and I would not like to lose you. You shall ride one of these horses, but not now. They wish to entice you away and hold you for a hostage."

To the king he said coolly in Arabic:

"This is my servant. In my country, none ride but the king."

"Then let us both ride, my brother," was the crafty response. "I will tell them to saddle Al Sabok and Hamama for us. They are the flower of the stud."

The duke made no objection, and at a signal from Fyzoul the grooms led forward a bay stallion with black points whose grace and symmetry exceeded anything the other had ever seen before. This was Al Sabok (the Swift), who, if his looks belied him not, was the king of all horses. Beside him was a mare, equally beautiful, but of a delicate bluish gray, who went by the title of Hamama (the Dove.)

Diamantina looked at her keenly and then remarked to Fyzoul:

"Your mare is not as good as your horse. She has had her shoulder sprained, for I see the old mark of a blister."

For a moment Fyzoul looked ashamed, not of the trick, but of being found out; then he said harshly to the groom:

"Fool, that's not Hamama, I mean. It was Al Kader (the Clever One) that I bid thee bring. Saddle quickly."

This time it was a chestnut horse much like Al Sabok that came forward, but here again the duke's eye critically examining the animal saw the streaks of the firing-iron inside the off hock. He said nothing, however, till the king courteously waved him forward, saying:

"Mount, my brother. Al Kader is a swallow for speed, a goat for his sure feet."

"Nevertheless," answered the duke, suiting the action to the word, "I would rather try Al Sabok."

And in a moment he was in the saddle.

Fyzoul Abdallah's face contorted itself into a hideous writhing smile of disappointed malignity as he slowly mounted Al Kader, for he saw that his plan was discovered, but he made no remark as the duke rode out into the park, leaving Clarence Hart in command of the people of the yacht, gathered around the hall door inside while their camels were lying down outside.

The king noticed with wonder the bright mitrailleurs on the saddles of some of the camels. He understood their use at once, for the Persians have used camel guns called *samboures* for more than a century, but the peculiar shape of the Gatling gun puzzled him.

"What are those, my brother?" he asked.

The duke made a quiet signal to the nearest man who stood by his kneeling camel's side, and instantly the gun was slewed round on its swivel and pointed into the park.

"Would the sultan like to see my killing machines?" asked the Brazilian, languidly. "Let him put his whole army out in the park, and I can mow them down like grass with those my guns. See that tree yonder. My man shall cut it down."

He pointed out the tree to the artilleryman, to whom he spoke in Hindostanee, and the man saluted respectfully, pointed his gun, and turned the crank of the already loaded machine.

The effect on the sultan was complete. He saw the steady stream of bullets go slapping into the little tree with a ceaseless flow till it toppled and fell, and his face turned of a gray pallor as he said, falteringly:

"This is the work of Eblis. You are a mighty magician."

The duke stopped the firing with one of his silent signals.

"That is only to show you what I can do if I am attacked. Here comes my officer with the woman, I see."

Dom Gil was indeed coming back.

CHAPTER X.

THE FLOWER OF CALCUTTA.

WITH Dom Gil came a single female figure, closely veiled, and the Duke of Diamantina laid his hand softly on the king's bridle and said, gently but firmly:

"Come, my brother, you have lost a troublesome woman and gained a faithful sword. Let us go in."

The barbarian—for Fyzoul was, after all, a barbarian—was sufficiently cowed by the civilized man to yield in silence, and the duke rode up to the hall door and dismounted after the king, who tamely reentered the castle.

As they went in, Clarence heard Diamantina say in English to Dom Gil:

"Seize them at once."

Dom Gil nodded, and then Clarence forgot everything else in the interest excited by the veiled figure that had just been ushered into the hall.

The duke beckoned him forward to the dais where the woman was already standing, and then said in English:

"I will beg the lady to take off her veil that Senhor Hart may be able to see if she is his friend."

Immediately the woman unveiled, and Clarence saw before him the Flower of Calcutta, pale and sad, as if she had no hope for life.

Poor Helen flushed scarlet when she met the eyes of the Brazilian. It was evident that no one had told her anything of what was about to happen, and the surprise of hearing her own language in such a scene was great.

Then she recognized Clarence Hart beside the duke, and her eyes lighted up again with hope, for she began to realize that ransom was at hand.

The Duke of Diamantina looked at her pale, beautiful face for a moment with undisguised admiration and surprise, and then asked Hart:

"My dear sir, will you introduce me to this lady so unfortunate?"

Stammering—he hardly knew why—and feeling strangely embarrassed, Hart repeated the formal words, that sounded so unnatural in that wild hold of Arabian desperadoes.

"Miss Lawton, the Duke of Diamantina."

Helen started and looked at the other with swimming eyes, her face all suffused with blushes.

"Oh, senhor duke," she said, in a stifled voice, "I never expected to see you in such a place as this."

Diamantina had taken the opportunity of fixing his eyes on hers while she spoke, as if in paying strict attention; but there was something so singular in his glance that Helen's blush grew deeper and deeper, and she finally dropped her eyes in confusion.

The Brazilian, with the cool, unruffled ease which always marked him, bowed low before her and replied:

"Ma dear ladee, I am charmed to be able to do a slight service to one so well known as the daughter of that eminent person, Sare Lumley Lawtone."

She looked up in quick surprise.

"Oh, sir, do you know my poor darling father? What would he say if he knew the danger I have run? Perhaps you have a father, too, your grace?"

Diamantina's face altered, and a reserved, offended expression crossed it as he turned away, saying curtly:

"My father is dead, mademoiselle."

Fyzoul Abdallah had listened to this English conversation in dumb embarrassment, still surrounded by the duke's people, for his own men did not know what to do.

They saw their master seated quietly on the divan in the midst of the white strangers, to all appearance chatting with the jeweled chief, and they did not dare to make a fight on account of his risk.

Now, however, Diamantina altered his tone. He ordered his men to draw away from Fyzoul, and beckoned Nubar al Hayzari and his guards to surround their king once more in the hall, which they eagerly hastened to do. He laid the jeweled saber at Fyzoul's feet, and drew back to the door of the hall, saying, in a clear and distinct voice:

"Our bargain is ended, brother. I have the slaves; you have the price of them. Now let us have peace and friendship, while I show my brother the presents I have brought to Dereyah."

But, already Fyzoul Abdallah was a different man. His guards were round him and a way of retreat was open; so that his fears vanished and his malice arose in arms. He had been cheated and cowed by this stranger, and had bought himself out of his power. Now was the time to be revenged. Turning to Nubar al Hayzari, he whispered:

"Rouse all the city. Seize the passes. Let not one man escape. We will have all their riches now."

Nubar nodded and slipped away among the guards while Fyzoul replied to the duke in his most oily manner:

"Let us not think of presents when one great king visits another. My brother must eat with me at once. Ho! Seyd, bring in the dishes

quickly. The Lord of Jewels dines with the Lord of Horses."

But to his surprise Diamantina did not offer to stir from the door, and a smile not devoid of derision was on his face as he answered:

"I have heard too much of Fyzoul Abdallah's fare to be anxious to eat thereof. I might not sleep easily at night after it. I will give my presents and take my leave, for my home is on the sea."

Fyzoul Abdallah was not at all put out. He was too consummate a villain and too secure in his own power to fear the duke's ultimate escape, though he felt a little virtuous anxiety to absorb his possessions by the safe way of poison rather than trust to the chances of ambushing the caravan on its way to Tuat.

He concealed all this anxiety under a smooth exterior, bowing and smiling:

"Since my brother is desirous to return to Tuat, far be it from me to detain him. My young men shall ride to the coast with him, and keep away all the robbers on the road."

This time the duke smiled so openly that Fyzoul could no longer think he was being deceived.

"My own men and my camel guns can clear a road to Tuat," he replied. "I am truly thankful to my brother for his hospitality. I notice that he has but few camels. I hope he will accept with favor this my little present."

He waved his hand, and into the hall shambled all the camels and donkeys with which his caravan had been provided, saving the gun animals and their followers that had been loaded with ammunition. The donkeys were all unsaddled, but the riding camels were still handsomely caparisoned, and over the housings of the foremost—the same lately ridden by the duke—was hung a splendid robe of scarlet silk with a velvet mantle above it.

Fyzoul Abdallah started to his feet, feeling that he was being tricked and insulted, but exactly how he knew not; and his guards instinctively drew their cimeters to keep off the irruption of beasts of burden.

The duke stood alone in the open doorway and waved his hand ironically to the sultan.

"Farewell, my brother," he said. "I am in great haste to reach Tuat; therefore I shall ride Al Sabok myself. I leave you Al Kader and Hamama. They were very good animals, twenty years ago."

Then he vanished out of the doorway, and the astounded king clapped his hands to his head and yelled in despair, as the full force of the situation struck him:

"Allah's curse upon them! They have stolen my horses!"

And indeed there was no sort of doubt about it. The frantic Fyzoul rushed to the door, and saw that the whole of his stud was in the foe's possession, vanishing with the speed of the wind in the direction of the Tuat road!

Al Kader and Hamama, the only two blemished animals of the entire stable, were still standing at the door. Diamantina had left behind him convincing proofs of his knowledge of horsemanship.

For several minutes the Arab chief was so utterly overwhelmed by the suddenness of the blow that he could do nothing but tear his beard in impotent rage.

Then Nubar al Hayzari, who had paused and come back at the sound of the escape, ventured to speak to his master, and his words were full of astute consolation.

"All is not lost, my master; they can go no faster than the camels with the *zamboures*," (thus he called the Gatlings). "We can take them all back in the passes. Al Kader will stand a day's work, yet."

Fyzoul listened, and his face cleared up a little. After all, a blemished Nedjed horse is swifter than a perfect animal of any other breed.

"Take him and go," was all he said in answer to Nubar, and the minister answered:

"On my head be it."

A moment later he was flying toward the city like the wind. Al Kader had been fired for a spavin, it is true; but no one would have dreamed of it to see the way the beautiful creature skimmed over the ground, as swift at twenty-two as the best colt in the Derby entries.

In the meantime, as Nubar had from the first predicted, the caravan of Diamantina could advance no faster than the pace of the camels that bore the Gatling guns; which, with their saddles and riders, weighed about four hundred pounds. A burden camel will carry twice as much, but its pace is slow; and if pressed to a trot it cannot preserve that pace to any distance without great distress.

Nevertheless Dom Gil, who had assumed the management of the caravan, kept up a rapid amble all that afternoon, till the shades of evening closed around them, when the camels began to flag and fall, and a halt was called.

It was in an open valley, where a large spring gave birth to a running rivulet, that the caravan of Diamantina now went into camp, the gun camels being unloaded, and the deadly mitrailleurs trained to command all the approaches.

Not an Arab had been seen all day, and Hart remarked to the duke:

"We seem to have given them the slip at last, senhor duque."

Diamantina smiled as he answered, in his tranquil way:

"My dear sir, our danger begins to-night."

"Then do you think there is danger that we may not reach the coast?"

"My dear sir," was the quiet answer, "we shall reach the coast—some of us. It is a question how many will do it, *alive*."

CHAPTER XI.

THE ENCAMPMENT.

As the sun went down that night it left the moon in the zenith, half full, and under her mild beams the camp was soon in fair order. Clarence had noticed, when leaving the yacht, that the duke was traveling very light, having hardly any of the baggage one might expect from one of his luxurious habits.

A single tent of silk, very light and compact, was all that he carried besides food, and this was at once appropriated to the use of the rescued Helen, who was secluded in true Oriental fashion.

During the rapid ride from Dereyah, Clarence Hart had not had a single opportunity to speak to the woman he loved, though he had longed, inexpressibly, to do so. He had seen her placed by the duke's own hands on one of Fyzoul's horses, and, from that time forth, Diamantina had remained close to her side, from which the respect of etiquette banished every one else.

Clarence himself felt this restraint as strongly as any one, though he fought against it, and strove to muster courage enough to ride up beside Helen and engage her in conversation. He tried to argue with himself that he was the Brazilian's equal, that he had not yet accepted the post of secretary to the whims of a millionaire. It was all in vain. A subtle influence that he could not divine, kept him divided from the woman he loved, and he was compelled to ride in the rear, out of earshot, while Helen was conversing in the most animated manner with this splendidly handsome man, this combination of Croesus and Adonis, who could do anything he pleased with almost any woman he met, as Clarence bitterly thought.

In fact, the young man, having once saved this girl's life and having good reason to believe that she was not indifferent to him, was now miserably jealous, and began to feel all the love and admiration he had felt for Diamantina rapidly turning to bitter hatred.

Nevertheless, such was the fascination of this singular man over all around him, that no sooner did Hart listen to his melodious "Ma dear sara," and see his wonderful smile when he spoke to him at the halt, than all his uneasiness vanished to the winds, and he felt ready to follow Diamantina wherever he chose to lead.

All the same, however, the duke effectually debarred him from seeing Helen; for no sooner did she dismount, than the tent was raised, into which the lady was ushered by Diamantina himself, after which she was no more seen that night, except by the duke's little black boy, who took them in their supper.

Clarence would have fretted at this, had it not been for the exquisite tact of the duke, who kept him in conversation, asking him his opinion of this and that, strolled with him round the defenses of the little camp, and gave him charge of two of the guns, with the remark: "My dear sir, I shall hold you responsible if the Arabs get in on your side. We have a precious treasure to guard, and we must not go to sleep, or Fyzoul Abdallah will wake us up when the moon sets."

Clarence caught at two of the other's words, and echoed:

"A precious treasure, indeed. Oh, senhor, if you knew how precious she is to me! I saved her from the sea once. God grant I do it from the Arabs."

Diamantina leaned his hand on the shoulder of the American, as he answered:

"My dear sir, she may be precious to you; but, I warn you, keep from her, as you value your happiness! She shall be saved, and I will give her back to her father, if it costs me the lives of every man here. But, take my advice, and think no more of this lady."

Clarence looked at the Brazilian in some surprise, and managed to answer:

"Why do you say this to me, your grace?"

"Because I see that you are bent on making yourself miserable," was the quiet reply. "My dear sir, you are an American, and I love all Americans for the sake of one to whom I owe my life and liberty. You do not know these English as I do. Sir, they are as cruel as the tiger, as selfish as the swine. Do you think that this Sir Lumley Lawton would give you his daughter because you loved her and she loved you? No, no, my dear sir! That man would sell his child to Satan himself, if the dark gentleman would put on the likeness of a lord with plenteous money. Sir, be advised. Leave these English to themselves, for there is a curse upon them—a curse that will yet wither and blast them to ashes and dust!"

The American gazed with wonder on Diamantina, for his usually calm and frigid manner had changed to one of intense earnestness.

and his eyes glowed like burning coals as he gesticulated with true southern fervor.

"Ah, your grace," returned Clarence, in a melancholy tone, "I know that I have little or no hope in loving this lady, but my heart is stronger than my sense. I cannot help loving her. Is she not lovely?"

Diamantina shrugged his shoulders and retired into his usual frigid mask.

"My dear sir, I never argue. Be pleased to see to your duties on this side the camp. These men understand English. Most of them are Lascars or ex-sepoys."

With a slight military salute he left Clarence to his own devices, and strolled off to the other side of the camp, where he could be seen in close conversation with Dom Gil.

Clarence Hart, abashed to a degree he could hardly have deemed possible by the quiet authority of a man he had only known about five days, attended to his duties in silence.

The camp was laid out with a strict view to defense. The horses were fastened around an inner square, eating their barley with the vigorous appetite of Arabians, and around them was drawn a chain of sentries, each man sheltered behind a little pile of saddles on which he could rest his rifle. The Gatlings occupied the angles of the defense, placed in pairs, and the ground on the outside was clear and level, though the camp itself was full of palm-trees around the spring. The only weak point in the defense was in the direction of the little stream that issued from the spring. This was fringed with bushes that spread out at intervals into thickets and might possibly conceal lurking foes, though as yet they had seen none.

Clarence, with the truly American instinct of distrusting a cover near camp, thought he would go over to Dom Gil and ask whether he might not have these bushes cut down.

The Brazilian seemed to understand English better than he spoke it, for he nodded assent to Hart's reasonings, but for all that he replied:

"Oh, senhor duque say no. Ze Arab-a s'all-a come-a dat way, 'e be all-a right-a."

"It will be all right if they come in that way? But they can reach the camp in the dark perhaps."

Dom Gil laughed.

"Perhaps-a! Ves'all see. Go to your posk-a. Ze moon 'e s'all get low at dis hour."

Repelled again, for Dom Gil's manner was decidedly brusque, Hart went back to his post which was at one of the angles overlooking the stream, Dom Gil occupying the other side, while the duke himself could be seen walking up and down the opposite face of the camp.

The moon was now hanging just above the mountains that hid them from Dereyah and had not more than five minutes to stay, when the whole valley suddenly started into life with a motley throng of Arabs coming from the hills all round, on horseback, on foot and camel-back, rushing to and fro, yelling loudly and firing into the camp.

Where a moment before had been peace, Pandemonium now reigned supreme.

As long as the moon remained in sight the assailants kept from a close assault; but as soon as it sunk, and darkness fell over the valley, down they came with a swoop, and Clarence could see their white cloaks flitting past within a few yards, while the bullets from their long muskets went singing overhead.

But all this while the camp remained perfectly silent.

The cooking fires had been extinguished with water long before, the aim of the Arabs was bad, and the only danger threatening the camp was that of a hand-to-hand fight in which numbers might crush them.

From this they were saved a moment later. Up from the midst of the camp soared a rocket with a sudden hiss that scared the Arabs, who had never seen anything of the sort before, and when it exploded it left in the air not merely a shower of stars but a blue light suspended from a tin parachute that illumined the valley for several hundred yards round, discovering a swarm of Arabs.

CHAPTER XII.

RUNNING THE GANTLET.

INTO this mass of foes at pistol range, eight Gatlings and some forty Winchester rifles suddenly opened fire, pouring in a storm of missiles that cleft the mass as a stream of water might dissolve a bank of new-fallen snow!

Only an instant they stood and then fled in wild confusion, the pitiless fire of the beleaguered band pursuing them under the light of three more blue-light rockets, and leaving the whole valley strewn with dead bodies of men and animals.

For a little while the noise was deafening, and then the lights went out and silence fell over the camp, only broken by the pitiful cries of the wounded outside left behind by their comrades.

Clarence had been too busy at his own post to attend to anything else, and he was considerably startled to hear the voice of Diamantina close to his elbow in the darkness, saying:

"My dear sir, they will not come back to-night. They will make their next stand in the Pass of El Katif."

"Is your grace satisfied of that?"

"So much so that I am going to sleep. Did you notice how wild they fired?"

"Yes. Do they always do that?"

"My dear sir, you do not understand. They dare not fire low for fear of the horses. They hoped to rush in and frighten them into running, but they have trained them too well to frighten at firing. Those horses will buy us the road to the sea, my dear sir."

And the facts proved Diamantina to be right. Not only did the Arabs disturb them no more that night but next morning found the valley empty even of the dead bodies, which had been carried off, while the whole country was deserted for miles.

They proceeded leisurely on their way, passing an Arab village and a town of no mean pretensions, in both of which they saw nothing but women and children; and noticed that all the operations of agriculture seemed to be entirely suspended. Every able-bodied man in the country had vanished, and even Clarence could not avoid a feeling of apprehension at the unwonted stillness.

That night they halted among rocks in the ruins of an old castle, and found to their surprise a store of barley for the horses with an Arabic legend above it to the effect:

"Allah will accept even a Christian who is kind to a horse."

It was evident that Fyzoul Abdallah was trembling for the fate of his darling horses, and willing to make almost any sacrifice to get them back. Clarence could not wonder at his anxiety when he looked at the beautiful creatures round him. They were born war-horses. Not a symptom of fatigue appeared in any one of them, though they had marched forty miles a day. On the contrary, most of them were fretting for a gallop in the evening, and he felt certain that but for the gun camels, they could have been at Tuat in a single day's ride.

No disturbance came near them that night nor in the morning till they had come within about ten miles of Tuat, and approached the edge of the Highlands by the narrow pass of El Katif.

Here at last they found their foes to the number of several thousand men, horse, foot and camel riders, spread over the rocks around the pass and evidently determined to stop further advance.

Clarence looked at them and felt a sinking of his heart, for it seemed impossible for their little handful of men to make any head against such a vast host.

Not so Dom Gil and the duke, who advanced with perfect coolness till within about a quarter of a mile of the Arab host, when the gun camels were brought into line and Dom Gil rode forward alone, waving a white handkerchief on a cane, as if to invite a parley, while the caravan halted.

The Arabs on their side seemed to be equally willing to talk peace, for they did not offer to fire, and a party came forward to meet Dom Gil. At their head was Fyzoul Abdallah himself, mounted on Al Kader, and his tones were full of eagerness as he asked:

"Will the Lord of Jewels yield? I do not wish to kill my brother."

"My master demands free passage for himself and his men to the sea," was Dom Gil's only reply.

"He has stolen my horses. Will he give them up?" asked Fyzoul.

"When they have carried him to the sea; not before."

"Will he give them up then?"

"He will, all but a horse and two mares, which he retains as an indemnity for the attack on his camp."

"Then he shall never see the coast," cried Fyzoul, indignantly. "I will cut out his heart with my own hand."

Dom Gil laughed contemptuously in the Arab's face. He knew that a high tone imposes on barbarians.

"Dog of an Arab," he answered, "if I raise my hand now you die before you can reach your own men. Do you not see my master's guns are trained on you?"

Fyzoul paled as he looked over at the eight mitrailleurs grinning toward him. He had seen them at work before.

"Now hearken to what my master will do," continued the Brazilian officer, harshly. "We are about to advance in column through your army. If they draw back and let us pass to our ships we will turn the horses loose on the beach for you. If you conclude to fight, each man has an order to shoot his horse dead and make a breastwork of his body, after which we shall mow your people down as we did the other night."

Fyzoul's eyes glared with malice and terror combined.

"If you kill my horses, I will roast you all alive," he hissed.

Dom Gil threw forward his carbine with a laugh.

"Say another word like that and I shoot

yourself," he answered. "Go back to your men. We will fight."

But Fyzoul was not the man to fight a ready foe. He preferred murdering an unwary one. Moreover, he did not like the looks of Dom Gil's gun pointing at him.

"Why should we quarrel?" he asked, in his old oily manner. "Let the Lord of Jewels advance. My men shall not harm him if he gives up the horses as he has promised."

"Then order them back," answered the wary Brazilian. "If a man comes within pistol-shot, our men kill all the horses and march through on foot."

The sweat rolled down Fyzoul's face with fear and perplexity, but he was obliged to yield. Love for his horses, his most precious possession, overpowered everything else and he reluctantly consented to the terms imposed.

Ten minutes later the Arabs had left the pass free and the whole of Diamantina's caravan defiled safely through, each mounted man holding a cocked pistol close to the head of his mouzt while the Arabs watched the maneuver in dumb dismay.

Before night they had reached the yacht in safety.

CHAPTER XIII.

H. M. S. SNAPPER.

COMMANDER OWEN LAWTON, R. N., was pacing the weather side of the quarter-deck of H. M. Gunboat Snapper, four guns, as that renowned and conspicuously neat vessel made her way toward Aden where she was to coal for her homeward voyage.

The Snapper had been out two years cruising off Zanzibar after slavers, and it was Commander Lawton's boast that he had done more work than all the rest put together, and had practically put down the slave-trade on the east coast of Africa.

"I've earned my furlough, by Jove!" he remarked to Lieutenant Sloman his executive officer, about fifteen times a day, "and by Jove I've got a right to crow over the others."

To which Sloman invariably replied:

"I think so too, captain."

Commander Lawton was known in the service by two appellations. His superiors called him "a promising officer;" his subordinates, especially those before the mast, voted him to be "a Tartar." His discipline was severe, his temper domineering, and he was but little liked, though his ability was respected.

As he walked the quarter-deck of the Snapper, his sharp, laughty face, with its bushy red side-whiskers and clean-shaven lips and chin, looked forbidding enough to justify the awe with which he was regarded by every one in the vessel except Sloman.

His spy-glass lay on the poop-rail, for there had been nothing in sight all the morning to justify its use, and Commander Lawton was in a brown study when he was startled by the musical cry of the look-out coming down from the fore cross-trees:

"Sail ho!"

"Where, where?" he asked, sharply, snatching up his glass in a moment.

"Three points off the lee bow, sir. Looks like a felucca going to Aden."

The captain leveled the glass in the direction indicated, and beheld three white lateen sails shining in the sun some twelve miles away, trimmed flat as if the felucca was going to cross his course.

"Crack on all she'll bear, Sloman, and tell the engineer to get up steam," said the captain to his first officer, and the crew of the Snapper began to spread a number of staysails, while the stokers down below raked out the ashes from the banked-up fires under which the Snapper had been cruising, while the engineer's gang let the screw down into its well once more.

The wind was steady and intensely hot from the coast of Africa, thus giving the Snapper the weather-gage of the felucca, and the English boat soon began to glide through the water at a high rate of speed.

For the next half-hour the captain said but little, but at the end of that time the screw began to revolve while the smoke from the Snapper's funnel showed that the engineer had got up steam at last.

Soon afterward that officer touched his cap to report:

"Steam up, sir, and only coal for an hour's full head."

"Very good, Mr. Grimes; put on all you can and drive her ahead. We'll catch that fellow before you give out."

In fact the Snapper was running at some eighteen knots an hour, what with the wind and her steam, and every one thought they would soon overhaul the felucca, which Lawton was chasing as much for the vanity of showing the speed of his vessel as for any ulterior purpose.

But, to the surprise of Commander Lawton, after an hour had passed, and the revolutions of the screw became few and feeble, the white sails of the felucca seemed as distant as ever, and they became convinced that the Snapper was at last beaten by some Arab country boat.

"And yet, I never saw an Arab with such white sails," observed Lawton to Sloman.

"I should say she was a Greek xebec, going back through the canal after taking a cargo of wine to Bombay," replied the first officer. "I've heard that Greek wines are coming into fashion in India."

"Greek or Arab, she sails like the very deuce," retorted Lawton, impatiently. "If we couldn't lift her under steam she'll drop us now. Haul the screw out of water, sir. It's doing no good now. Get up the square foresail and clap on the stu'n-sail booms. I'll run under water but what I'll overhaul that Greek before we get to Suez."

"Not if we stop at Aden, sir," ventured Sloman. "The orders say—"

"Deuce take the orders. That fellow may be a slaver for all I know. Clap on more sail, sir."

The Snapper heeled over under her pile of canvas till the water washed in at the lee scuppers, and rushed on after the felucca, which was now dead ahead and holding the same course as the cruiser.

But all the sails of the Snapper were of no avail to catch the light-heeled stranger which on the contrary began to sink on the horizon before their eyes just as the white and yellow outlines of the Arabian coast began to rise in the north-east.

The stranger shifted her course westward and gave the cruiser an inside track for advantage, but still the Snapper could do no more than hold her own.

It was not till the purple rocks of Babel Mandeb loomed up that they began to make any perceptible gain on the felucca, and then they noticed it had shortened sail and was running into the Red Sea as if distrusting shoals.

Commander Lawton, with the reckless determination which had won him all the praise he ever deserved, stood on till he found himself within two miles of the other when the spy-glass revealed her plainly.

"She's a beauty, captain," declared Sloman, in his sober way, as he inspected her narrowly. "Looks like a yacht, I should say, but I never heard of a felucca-rigged yacht before."

Here one of the midshipmen who had been hovering near looked so knowing that Lawton asked:

"Well, young gentleman, what is it?"

"Please, sir, I think I know who she is."

"That vessel?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do you know?"

"Please, sir, I've seen her before."

"You; where?"

"Please, sir, you remember I came through the canal on the Teaser before I joined the gunboat. That felucca was lying at Suez then with a big ship for tender."

"A big ship for tender? What do you mean, youngster?"

"She's a yacht, sir, belongs to the richest fellow in the whole world, so they told me at Suez, and he has the ship to carry extra cargo of all sorts."

The captain looked at Sloman in a doubting manner.

"Do you think he knows what he's talking about, Sloman?"

"Yes, sir; Mr. Young has always been a reliable young officer."

"Then who is this richest fellow in the whole world, Mr. Young?"

"I don't know his name, sir, but they say he is a Brazilian, and owns a whole lot of diamond mines. They called him the Diamond Duke."

"I've heard of him, now Mr. Young speaks, sir. He's a great friend of the Khedive and his Yankees, but they say he hates the English, for some reason or other."

"Well, whoever he be, we're likely to know pretty soon," answered the commander, thoughtfully, "for we're coming up with him now, hand over hand."

And in fact while they were talking they had lessened their distance from the felucca to less than a mile, when the Snapper yawed, fired a gun and showed the English flag.

As the smoke drifted away to leeward the light report of an answering gun of small size came from the felucca and up went the red and yellow flag of Portugal and Brazil at the end of the yacht's main-yard.

Still, however, the vessel kept on running, with only jib and mainsail, up along what they could now see from the deck of the Snapper looked like a line of breakers.

After a little while she was seen to glide through a green opening, when the Snapper found herself compelled to shorten sail at the very moment the felucca put up her foresail and spanker, to avoid running into one of the coral reefs that infest the whole of the Red Sea.

However, the advantage gained by the leadership of the yacht was not to be thrown away, and when the gunboat passed through the same channel as the felucca they were still within long gunshot.

Then the domineering ways of Commander Lawton cropped out.

"Send a shot after that fellow and make him heave-to," he said to Sloman.

The old lieutenant stared.

"A shot, sir?"

"I believe my English is plain, Mr. Sloman. A shot, sir, from the seven-inch rifle first. If that doesn't bring him to, try the nine-inch."

Mr. Sloman hesitated.

"Not near him, I suppose, sir?"

"Certainly not. Hit him if you can and cripple him. I want to board the fellow."

For the last time Sloman ventured a remonstrance.

"We shall catch it for this, sir, if that be a yacht."

"I take the responsibility, sir. Do as I order at once."

Sloman touched his cap, gave the necessary orders and a few minutes later the heavy report of the seven-inch rifle boomed over the sea, while a shrieking, puffing shell, making a sound like a locomotive under full speed, went skipping over the waves and passed right between the yacht's masts.

The effect was immediate, and Commander Lawton closed his strong white teeth in a grim wolfish sort of smile as the felucca wore short round on her heel and came bowling back toward the Snapper.

"I thought we'd bring that fine gentleman to his senses," he remarked, with a chuckle. "Now we'll see what he's made of."

Sloman volunteered no remark, and looked as solemn as if at a funeral till the yacht hove-to within a few cable-lengths, when a boat dropped from her side and a young man in a naval uniform, that they at once recognized as American, was pulled to the British man-of-war by a crew of swarthy Malays as the Snapper threw her sails to the mast.

Not a word passed till he had climbed the side by a rope hastily thrown from the gangway, and then he inquired of the officer of the deco who met him at the gangway:

"What ship is this, and who's her captain, if you please?"

"Her Majesty's gunboat Snapper, Captain Lawton," answered the officer, impressively.

The American's face had been very stern and stiff before, but it softened immediately he heard the captain's name as he asked:

"Any relation to Sir Lumley Lawton?"

"His son, I believe," was the reply.

"Then be kind enough to say that Mr. Clarence Hart, late of the U. S. navy, would like to see him."

"The captain's on the quarter-deck, sir. You can see him at once."

And Clarence found himself on the quarter-deck of the Snapper, confronting a stern, sarcastic-looking man with keen blue eyes, red whiskers, a hook nose, and very white teeth, who observed:

"Well, sir, your captain found it best to heave-to. Her majesty's vessels are not to be eluded by every nameless rover that chooses to hoist a flag. Who are you, sir, and what is your boat there?"

Hart reddened with anger and then turned pale. This was Helen's brother!

"I was an officer of the United States navy a few months ago, sir," he answered, firmly.

"The felucca is the yacht of his grace, the Duke of Diamantina, who demands an apology for your insult in firing a shot at his head just now."

"Does he, indeed?" retorted Captain Lawton, with a broad sneer. "And do the ex-officers of your navy act as messengers for scurvy Portuguese dukes?"

Hart took no notice of the insult, but went on, quietly:

"If the apology is not given, he will sink this vessel in one minute; for he has three torpedoes aimed at her, now."

Commander Lawton stared, and asked:

"Are you mad? Is your friend a pirate?"

"On the contrary he holds a regular commission in the Brazilian navy, which empowers his vessel to act as a ship-of-war, and he already has his torpedoes pointed at you. Do you refuse to apologize?"

"Why, curse his impudence!" sputtered Lawton, white with rage. "I'll blow him out of the water in five minutes."

"Pardon me, captain, you'll do no such thing," returned the American, coolly. "First, before you can beat to quarters, you will have a hundred pounds of dynamite blowing a hole in your bottom. Secondly, the duke has saved the lives of your own sister and your father's, who are both now on board the yacht, and who would both be killed if we came to blows."

Captain Lawton's face altered.

"What do you mean?" he asked, in a manner indicating great excitement.

"I mean that I was a passenger on the Benares with the Misses Lawton; that the ship foundered two weeks ago; that we were picked up off a raft by a slave dhow; and that but for the Duke of Diamantina, your sister would today be a slave in the harem of Sultan Fyzoul Abdallah. Now, Captain Lawton, do you feel disposed to persevere in a wanton insult against the law of nations, and a friendly power, or

will you make honorable amends to the Duke of Diamantina?"

While he was speaking, Lawton's face was a study of conflicting emotions. Pride, shame, reluctance to give way, were finally succeeded by a forced smile, as he answered:

"Of course I'll apologize. It was only a mistake. I took you for a Greek slaver or smuggler."

To this lamely self-evident lie, Hart made no answer except a silent bow; and he was turning to go back when Captain Lawton forced himself to say:

"Excuse me, Mr. a—a—"

"Hart, Captain Lawton."

"I beg pardon, Mr. Hart, but would you be so good as to tell his grace that I shall do myself the honor of coming on board at once, to apologize in person for the mistake?"

"I will tell him, sir."

And Clarence went down the side and leaped into his boat just as the boatswain of the Snapper piped the captain's gig, reaching the yacht and reporting to the duke as the English boat touched the water.

As soon as he told Diamantina that the English captain had apologized, the duke called out in Portuguese to Dom Gil, who had been superintending some mysterious preparations in the bows:

"The dog begs. Draw her teeth!"

Then he turned to Hart, who was now recognized as a full-fledged member of his suite, and asked:

"And who is this valiant capitan, who fires at harmless strangers?"

"He is Captain Owen Lawton, brother to the young lady in the cabin, your grace, and commands the Snapper."

Diamantina's eyes lighted up with an expression that Hart could not fathom, as he said, slowly:

"My dear sir, it only needs the father, now, to make all the family complete. And this is the honorable son of the honorable Sir Lumley! Aha! it is well."

As he spoke, Commander Owen Lawton, R. N., the picture of politeness, sprung on deck and bowed low before the duke.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON GUARD.

"I HAVE come, as I told your friend Mr. Hart, to express my sincere regrets for the mistake which led me to fire at your vessel, duke," began Commander Lawton, with mellifluous courtesy. "I trust your grace will accept the apology in the spirit in which it is offered, for I hear that to you I am indebted for the rescue of a dearly loved sister from a fate worse than death."

The duke smiled one of his languidly frigid smiles, but did not offer to take the other's extended hand.

"I was charmed to be of some little service to a lady in distress, senhor. It is hardly worth while to mention it, till I have restored the lady to Sir Lumley Lawton himself."

He remained standing, with a cold and dignified demeanor that abashed even Owen Lawton, domineering tyrant by nature and education as he was. It was with a nervous laugh and half stammer that the British officer continued:

"Well, you see, I suppose your grace has had enough trouble with my family by this time. Perhaps I'd better take charge of my sister myself, you know."

"The way to the cabin is open, senhor," was the frigid reply; "but remember that the doubt of my honor which the removal will imply is an offense to the individual which no apology can wipe out."

Lawton stared at this dark, handsome man, whose great black eyes were usually so sleepy, and found them glowing like coals as they faced his own. Then all the blonde blood in his own veins fired up to resent the implied menace, and his own fierce blue eyes widened as he retorted:

"As you please, sir. I shall at least ask her if she prefers to remain here or go with her brother."

"You will find the ladies, your aunt and your sister, in the cabin, senhor," replied Diamantina, as coldly as before. "Senhor Hart will show you the way."

Lawton bowed stiffly and followed the American into the cabin, where the first person he saw was his honorable and kittenish aunt, who exclaimed in great surprise:

"Why, Owen, is that you? Where did you spring from?"

"From the quarter-deck of the Snapper, aunt. Where's Helen?"

The captain could see that his respected aunt was not overjoyed to see him, for her greeting was decidedly cool. Owen Lawton was ten years older than his sister Helen, and his appearance by the side of aunt Lorelia was apt to raise doubts as to the youthfulness of the Honorable and kittenish maiden.

The sound of his voice, however, brought Helen out of the state-room to which she had

retired, and she flew to embrace her brother with real affection, for Helen was fond of the captain, who had always petted her.

"Why, Owen," she said, after the first greetings were over, "was it your ship that fired at us just now? I was frightened to death. And after the duke had been so kind and generous to us all! Why, he's taking us to Suez to meet papa."

"To meet my father? Why, has Sir Lumley left Calcutta?" asked Owen.

"So they told us on the Himalaya, which we spoke off Muscat. They had news of the loss of the Benares, and he set off at once to look for me—and oh, Owen! have you heard what a terrible time we had? saved from drowning by Mr. Hart and from the Arabs by the duke. You can thank them that you have any sister at all, sir, for I never thought to see any of you again."

"Well, Helen," said her brother, a little awkwardly, "I'm sure I'm very much obliged to them and all that sort of thing, but I think you'd better shift yourself and aunt Lorelia on board the Snapper at once. It'll be more proper, you know."

Here aunt Lorelia burst out:

"Indeed, we'll do no such thing, sir. If we're not properly accommodated here, I should like to know where you'll find a nicer place!"

"Yes, but I don't know this duke," persisted the captain, with true British obstinacy.

"I should think not, from the way you tried to kill him and all of us," retorted aunt Lorelia.

"Let me tell you that he is a gentleman who moves in any society he pleases, and that if you cannot see the advantages of knowing him, your father will not be so mad. Helen is in my charge, and I don't intend to move from here till I meet Lumley at Suez."

"And do you refuse to come, Helen?" asked Captain Owen, sharply, of his sister.

"Don't put it that way, Owen, please. Papa put me in aunt Lorelia's charge when we left India, and we cannot leave the duke's yacht without a gross rudeness: can we, dear?"

"As you please," returned Owen, constrainedly, for it went sorely against the grain with him to yield any point, however unreasonable. "Then I suppose I'd better take my leave and follow you to Suez."

"Nay, Owen, don't look offended, dear. Have you been introduced to Mr. Hart and the duke? Where are they, aunt?"

"Hart, as soon as he had ushered the British officer into the cabin, had returned on deck, where he was talking to Diamantina, as they both watched the Snapper slowly drifting astern. Neither referred in any way to the presence of the obnoxious captain on board, but confined themselves to remarks on gunboats, rigs, and such like nautical subjects, in which both took more or less interest."

It was while they were engaged in a rather languid discussion on the respective merits of lateen sails and those affected by American schooners, that they heard Helen's sweet voice behind them, and turned to see her, blushing divinely, leading up her brother to the duke.

Helen, despite of all the spoiling she had had, was one of those amiable girls who are always making peace between others, and her fine tact had already perceived that there was trouble of some sort between Owen and her rescuers.

"I have brought to your grace a gentleman of the English nation," she began, playfully, "who professes never to know any one till he has been properly introduced. Permit me then to do the honors: Captain Owen Lawton, of Her Britannic Majesty's ship Snapper, His Grace the Duke of Diamantina. Is that right, Owen?"

The cold reserve of Diamantina relaxed into a smile at her manner, for it is difficult to resist a pretty girl, and Owen Lawton put on his most engaging face as he said:

"I am delighted to meet his grace, to whom my sister tells me I owe so much of kindness shown to her and my aunt."

The duke's only answer was a cool and silent bow, his face retaining its inscrutable expression.

"And this, Owen, is Mr. Hart," pursued Helen, turning to the American.

Both gentlemen bowed with great outward politeness, as naval officers of different nations meeting at sea, and Owen observed affably:

"Hope to see more of you, some day, Mr. Hart."

Then Dom Gill, tall, angular and unprepossessing in his gaudy Brazilian uniform, stalked forward to be presented and remarked:

"Ze honor-a of see ze senhor capitan s'all be unexpect. I'ope ze capitan s'all ze goot health enjoy. Salut, senhor?"

Owen Lawton rather curled his lip at the other's ungainly figure, but made shift to bow and say:

"Very happy, I'm sure."

Then he turned to the duke, with another attempt at cordiality, rather forced.

"Your grace has the heels, of me when my coal runs out, I must confess," he said. "I suppose you'll get to Suez before I shall. In fact, I've orders to stop at Aden for coal, you know."

"We shall meet again, senhor," was the quiet

reply of the duke. "Do the ladies wish to leave the yacht?"

"Why no, in fact—ah—if your grace is disposed to be troubled with them till you reach Suez—ah—I don't like to impose on your courtesy, you know, but, ah—in fact—"

And Owen Lawton, bold and reckless as he was, somehow broke down before this quiet, dark gentleman, whose voice was so soft.

"I have not complained of the trouble, senhor," replied Diamantina, slowly. "I shall take the ladies to Suez and thence to Cairo, where I hear Sare Lomlee is now engaged making inquiries about his daughter. You will stop at Cairo, senhor?"

"Of course, if my sister be there when I get to Suez," hastily answered the other.

The duke fixed his dark eyes on the blue orbs of the Englishman and spoke very slowly and distinctly:

"I shall expect to see you at Cairo, capitan, if you stop at all."

"Of course, of course," replied Owen, a little at a loss to understand.

"I shall be at my house, and shall expect to hear from you on your arrival," continued the duke, in the same measured tones. "Salut, senhor."

He lifted his cap with naval courtesy and Owen Lawton went back to his vessel; then the two parted company almost immediately, one heading for Aden and coal, the other for Suez and the canal.

The breeze held strong from the desert all day, and within an hour from the time Captain Lawton left the yacht, the Snapper was hull down on the horizon, while the felucca was gliding away to the north at sixteen knots an hour, parting the short waves with her knife-like prow in a soft hissing gurgle as she sped along.

In another hour the British ship was a mere speck on the horizon and then she disappeared altogether, while the duke and his guests sat down to dinner under the awning of the yacht's quarter-deck.

Clarence Hart felt much more happy and at ease since the yacht had been at sea. In the first place his naval experience made him feel more at home on the water, and secondly he saw Helen constantly since he had accepted the post of secretary to the duke.

By some subtle and indefinable influence Diamantina had managed to keep him separated from Helen till he had formally announced his readiness to serve the duke, and immediately thereafter allowed him the fullest access to the lady's presence.

Clarence could not explain how it was accomplished; but none the less he felt himself to be a mere powerless puppet in the duke's hands, and was content, for the first time in his life, to follow another's lead.

At the same time that he saw Helen daily, he felt that some sort of a barrier, intangible but certain, had risen between them. The Hon. Lorelia treated him with the same sort of languid condescension that she practiced toward her inferiors in general, and even Helen, while she spoke to him as an equal, kept him at a certain distance which he had never observed before.

The young man saw and felt all this, and resented it on his own part by a studied coldness of demeanor. He felt that something or some one was at work to prejudice Helen against him, but could not get an opportunity to see her alone to ask an explanation.

The Hon. Lorelia was forever by her side when not engaged with O'Shea, and the duke was always ready to claim her attention when Lorelia went off guard. Hurt and offended, but unable to define the offense, Clarence took refuge in the society of O'Shea, who had become to all appearance the favorite guest of the duke.

Clarence was rather puzzled at one thing in O'Shea's behavior. At the time of the encounter between the yacht and the British gunboat the Captain of Control had disappeared the moment Lawton entered his boat. Not till the Snapper was hull down to the south did O'Shea come on deck, and when Clarence asked him where he had been he replied in a confused manner:

"I didn't want to see that blackguard. Sure, I know his father too well, bad luck to him!"

"Why, what's the matter between you, if it's a fair question?"

"Will ye keep it still if I tell ye?"

"Of course I will."

"Well, it goes back to twenty years ago, before Miss Helen there was born, the darlin'! Ah, she's the only white one in the whole flock of black sheep."

"Yes. And did his father offend you?"

"He robbed me, the black-hearted villain. Ah, ye know all about it, Hart. Ye know that watch the ould maid's so proud of? Sure, the poor Rajah, rest his soul, gave it me with his last words, and that thief made me turn it in to his head-clerk. And now she wears it and says he gave it her."

"But, what has Captain Lawton to do with all this?"

"Isn't he the living image of what his father was, the spalpeen? I'll never be 'asy till I get him opposite to me, with a pair of saw-handles between the two of us. Didn't he once strike me, the little villain, and I a soldier in the ranks as couldn't strike back? Don't let's talk of it, Hart. I'll be the death of that blackguard, yet."

Clarence made no more remarks, for he saw that the Irishman was thoroughly worked up by his thoughts of old days, before he was made an officer and a gentleman by the flat of a simple little widow lady who signs herself "Victoria R."

He had evidently felt afraid to trust himself on deck, in presence of Lawton, while restrained by the hospitality of Diamantina from any offensive act, and the American thought to himself, with some wonder, that this Lawton family had a good many bitter enemies, notwithstanding their position in society.

For himself he felt that he hated Owen Lawton positively, aunt Lorelia negatively, Sir Lumley vaguely but expectantly; while for Helen, he had a mixture of pique and wounded pride, forced admiration and involuntary tenderness, such as any other man would have interpreted as being "over head and ears in love."

CHAPTER XV.

THE PRINCESS MELAPETROS.

THE Cairo of 1877 is much changed from the Cairo of Mehemet Ali of forty years ago. The shrieking locomotive now whirled the traveler in from the flat and marshy country of the Nile Delta, covered with a maze of irrigating canals, to a fine station, surrounded with gardens and suburban villas, from whence broad macadamized streets, bordered with handsome houses and shops, lead into the old city, behind its frowning walls. The Ezbekiah and Ismailiah where the foreign population of the city chiefly resorted, are handsome modern quarters, with gas and water, paved streets and public gardens, all as different from the tumble-down rottenness of the "Arab quarter," as can be conceived.

In the most fashionable part of the Ezbekiah quarter, looking out on the garden with which the Khedive adorned the city in 1867, stands a large and handsome house, such as one sees on the Boulevard Montmartre, in Paris, or Fifth avenue, in New York.

Large enough to hold forty or fifty rooms, ornately French in style, surrounded with gardens of its own, jealously walled in from view, this house was known throughout all Cairo in 1877 as the "Palace of Jewels."

So the poetical Arabs called that which the more prosaic Europeans had dubbed "The Million House." In both cases the title had reference to the supposed wealth of the owner; for this house belonged to the Duke of Diamantina, and was occupied by him two or three months in every year.

It was but seldom he came there in spring or summer, for Cairo is chiefly a winter resort; and when a long train of wagons was seen rumbling into the court-yard late in May, the gossips of the quarter were all astir with the news that the "Diamond Duke had come back."

They saw load after load of comestibles, with crowds of cooks and black slaves going in, while a tall, angular man, in European clothes, bustled about, giving orders in bad Arab'c. Every one knew the figure and face of the duke's steward and manager, Dom Gil Grabador, and all the shopkeepers bowed most obsequiously to him.

For several hours after Dom Gil's arrival the bustle was incessant; and then it subsided into quiet and order, as a carriage drove up, from which alighted the famous millionaire himself, accompanied by two ladies and a young man in white clothes.

The duke ascended the steps with the younger of the two ladies, and the young man gave his arm to the elder. The gaping crowd of sight-seers watched them enter the cool hall of the house, where the door closed on them and shut them out from all further view.

Inside the house Dom Gil was bowing before his chief, and the duke asked in his rapid Portuguese, unintelligible to the others:

"Is she here yet?"

"The princess is in the *salon*, senhor," returned the major-domo with another bow.

Diamantina nodded and led his companions down the cool, dark hall to an immense saloon, cooled in the same manner as the yacht's cabin, and furnished with a mixture of luxury and simplicity truly Oriental. There they were met by a lady of very remarkable beauty, whose rich robes set off her face and figure with dazzling effect.

Then the duke dropped Helen's hand from his arm, and said, in his usual quiet manner:

"My mother, the Princess Melapetros, Miss Helen Lawton, daughter of Sir Lumley."

The beautiful lady gave a slight start at the name, and looked earnestly at Helen for a moment ere she replied:

"I am glad to see the young lady. Her father is here, too, and he has been inconsolable for his supposed loss. And you are safe, my dear?"

As she spoke she was scanning Helen with such keenness that the girl's eyes sunk under her own. The result of the inspection seemed to be

favorable, for the princess took Helen's face in her hands and kissed her kindly.

Then the duke seemed for the first time to remember the presence of the Hon. Lorelia, who was waiting a little awkwardly, leaning on Clarence Hart's arm, behind them.

"Pardon, madame. The Honorable Miss Lawton, sister of Sir Lumley," he said rapidly. "The princess, my mother."

The Hon. Lorelia prided herself on her ease in high society, and yet she felt a trifle embarrassed before this lady, who must be as old as herself, but looked at least twenty years younger.

The Princess Melapetros was of a very rare order of beauty, a blonde with large black eyes. Her complexion was pale, but wonderfully fair, and her figure was perfection in its rounded curves, like those of the Venus de Medici. Her tawny gold hair was coiled up with jewels in a picturesque Oriental head-dress, and she wore the robes of a Greek lady of rank, perhaps the most picturesque in the world. There was a soft and high-bred languor about her whole manner and appearance, as different from the acquired insolence of the Anglo-Indian lady as could be imagined.

She did not offer to salute Lorelia, but bowed with perfect courtesy as she said to her, in English:

"You have had a wonderful escape, Miss Lawton, my son's steward tells me."

"Oh, dear me, yes, your highness. We owe everything to the dear duke, I'm sure. He has been most kind to bring us all this way to meet our poor dear Lumley. Has your highness ever met my brother?"

The princess smiled slightly.

"I have seen him, but I doubt if he will recognize me. The ladies in Egypt go abroad veiled, you know, and I follow the customs of the country."

"A very nonsensical custom, I must say," protested Lorelia. "I'm sure it must be very unpleasant."

"Not when women grow as old as I am, madame," was the placid answer. "We find it to advantage not to expose our faces to the public view."

The Hon. Lorelia flushed deeply for the first time in many years. Here was a beautiful woman, who did not look over thirty, calmly calling herself the mother of the man at whom the honorable virgin had been "setting her cap," and Lorelia felt bitterly that if the princess was an old woman, she herself must be still more ancient.

"Oh, I'm sure no one would think that of you, princess," she simpered. "You must have been married very young indeed to have such a grown-up son as his grace."

The duke led Helen to a seat without paying any more attention to the Hon. virgin; but the princess seemed to find something painful in the allusion to her marriage, for she sighed deeply as she answered:

"Madame, I was a widow at sixteen."

Then, without recurring further to the subject, she looked at her watch and remarked:

"Eleven o'clock. Have you sent to Sir Lumley, my son?"

As we know, to see any one take out a watch was a sure bait for the Hon. Lorelia to exhibit her own, and in this case the temptation was great, for the watch of the princess was a close match for that of the ancient virgin in beauty and costliness.

Before the duke could answer his mother, Miss Lawton was crying out with kittenish animation:

"Oh, princess, how singular! I do think that your watch is the very mate for mine! My brother always told me there never was but one such other made in Paris."

Clarence Hart, who had been standing, retired from the group at a respectful distance, as became his position, saw the princess start violently, and then stagger backward as Lorelia spoke.

Rapid and noiseless, with the skill of a trained physician, he caught her in his arms as she was about to fall, and spoke to the duke:

"Madame is ill, your grace. Let me lay her on the couch yonder."

CHAPTER XVI.

SIR LUMLEY LAWTON.

IN a moment the duke was by his mother's side, speaking rapidly to her in some tongue unknown to the American, but the lady became so faint that they were obliged to lay her down on a couch, while Clarence bathed her temples with ice-water, thinking strange things to himself all the time.

Presently the princess revived and began to sob and talk wildly to her son in the same unknown language, while the two English women, much alarmed, could only stand by and pity her.

"What sent her off so, Helen?" asked Lorelia, in a whisper. "I wonder if she has heart disease?"

"Perhaps it's the heat," suggested Helen, and then Clarence Hart looked up, with all a doctor's authority in his eye as he said, sternly:

"Please be quiet. The lady needs rest. She is nervous."

He felt the duke, who was beside him, press his arm as a signal for silence, and presently the lady looked up at him and said in English:

"Who is this, my son?"

"This is Dr. Hart, my friend and secretary, who is hunting all over the world for his uncle, Gilbert Carver," was the rather singular reply of Diamantina.

The introduction seemed, however, to have a marked effect on the princess; for, to Clarence's intense amazement and confusion, she parted the hair on his forehead with both her soft white hands, as if he had been a boy, and gazed at him steadily with her dark, magnetic eyes for nearly a minute, ere she said:

"He is worthy of his uncle. God bless them both, Diamantina!"

And she deliberately kissed the young man on the forehead.

Clarence was so much confused that he turned as red as fire, while the Hon. Lorelia gave Helen one silent but eloquent look, and then walked away to the window, where good taste had already sent her niece.

While they were looking out, up to the door dashed a carriage, and out jumped a tall, stern-faced man, with clear, sharp features and long mutton-chop whiskers. Helen clapped her hands.

"Papa, papa! Here he is!"

They saw Sir Lumley run up the steps and pull the bell, and then the Duke of Diamantina said, in a low voice to Hart:

"Take my mother away; she is too ill to meet this man to-day."

But, to the surprise of all, the lady seemed to recover her strength at the sharp sound of the bell and the tone of Sir Lumley's voice in the passage, asking for his daughter.

She sat up and waved aside both her son and Clarence Hart, watching eagerly the doorway.

Presently in came Sir Lumley, tall, heavy, sarcastic, gray, the image of his son Owen, and the model of what Owen will be if he reaches fifty-five.

Every line of his hard, haughty face, with its large, loose-lipped mouth, had the domineering temper of its owner written plainly therein. The precision of his attire, Anglo-Indian all over; the whiteness of his puggaree hat with its green lining; the smoothness of his chin and lips, all told of the desk-man, the bureaucrat. Sir Lumley Lawton, yellow and dogmatic, was a favorable specimen of the Indian civil service official, absolute wielder of almost irresponsible power over thousands of people.

In the present case he looked at his best under the softening influence of paternal love, for Sir Lumley was an affectionate father.

There were tears in his eyes as Helen flew to meet him, and he even embraced Lorelia with considerable affection.

Meantime the Duke of Diamantina, the Greek princess and Clarence Hart became, unawares, spectators of this family meeting; and Clarence, for one, felt much interest in it.

As he had expected, he hated Sir Lumley from the first view, partly from natural antagonism to his cold, haughty face, partly from pure jealousy of the kisses Helen was lavishing on him.

But his eyes did not rest long on the family group. They were attracted, instead, to the two spectators like himself, who were watching Sir Lumley from the darkened room.

The Duke of Diamantina gazed at the Englishman with a slight lifting of the upper lip, a spreading of the wide nostril, a dilatation of the eye, that irresistibly reminded Hart of the appearance of some carnivorous animal that scents prey for the first time after a fast and sleep.

There was no ferocity there yet, but there was a revelation of depths of ferocity that might come to light in a moment more, should the scent come stronger.

Then his eyes turned on the princess, and the beautiful and languid lady was transformed. Her lips were parted over her white teeth, her nostrils tense with some secret emotion, and her bosom rose and fell in those short quick gasps that show how much a woman is wrought up, while her black eyes fairly blazed at the unconscious Sir Lumley, as he kissed his child again and again.

Something, he could hardly tell what, made Hart stir and go a little forward, so as to attract the princess's attention. He thought she must be ill, and laid his hand on her wrist with the quiet authority of a physician.

As much to his surprise as when she had kissed him before, the lady clutched his hand and whispered to him:

"It is he, indeed!"

The whisper, soft as it was, attracted the duke's attention, and he started round to his mother, saying something in Greek which caused her to calm her face instantly.

The first meeting of parent and child was now over, and Helen was just beginning to think of the presence of her host, when the loud rollicking voice of O'Shea was heard in the hall, and the gallant captain stalked into the room, resplendent in snowy linen.

"Faith, duke, and this Cairo in May's night as bad as Lucknow or Delhi," cried the jolly soldier, who had quite domesticated himself in the Diamantina household, with the "cheek" of a full-blooded Irishman. "I thought I'd just look ye up in your new quarters and — Eh! Is it? Holy Mother of God!"

The stout officer had passed on into the darkened room out of the glare outside, without noticing the Lawton tableau, and was suddenly confronted by the white face and gleaming eyes of the Princess Melapetros, who came close to him before he saw her.

The effect on O'Shea was astonishing. Stout and jolly as he was, he turned a dead white, staggered and nearly fell. Then, passing his hand over his brow, as if he felt giddy and confused, he stammered:

"I beg pardon, ma'am, my lady—I thought his grace was alone—I—"

"This is Captain O'Shea, of the English army, mother," said the soft, low voice of the duke at this juncture. "Captain, this is my mother, Princess Melapetros. Sir Lumley Lawton is in the room. Be composed."

He spoke the last words very low and rapidly, and O'Shea nodded his comprehension and compliance.

A moment later Sir Lumley was bowing, with the most finished courtesy, before the duke and the princess, whom he could hardly see in the darkened room, and expressing his thanks and gratitude for the inestimable service Diamantina had rendered him.

"My dear sir," rejoined the other, with his usual lazy grace, "it is nothing. I have long wished to see Sir Lumley Lawton outside of India, and I am happy in the accident that has brought it about."

"Has your grace, then, never been in India?" asked Sir Lumley, in some surprise.

"My dear sir, I have been in Goa; but you must reflect that it is not pleasant for a Portuguese to look on the country which Albuquerque first made known to civilization, and see another people in possession there."

"Indeed!" said Sir Lumley, with an uneasy laugh; "is it possible your people are so sensitive as that?"

"They are sensitive, senhor, and they never forget injuries till after vengeance—my people."

"Why, why, duke; I thought that Brazilians were rather a quiet and commercial set."

"My dear sir, I am not all Brazilian. My mother, who is now a Greek by adoption, is of another race. Permit me to present you to the Princess Euphrosyne Melapetros, my mother."

As the duke spoke, he made a silent signal with his hand to Dom Gil, who had softly glided into the room, and instantly a flood of light poured in at the rear windows, as the curtains drew apart at a single pull of a hidden cord.

It was like a cunningly contrived *coup de theatre* for more than one member of the company.

Sir Lumley Lawton saw before him the beautiful princess, a calm smile on her lips, and gave a violent start, turning as pale as if she had been a ghost, while the single word, "*Effe!*" escaped his lips.

The princess, all her former emotion replaced by perfect calmness, bowed and smiled, as she said:

"I am glad to meet Sir Lumley Lawton, at last. I have looked for that pleasure in vain for some time."

The pallor began to fade out of the Englishman's face, and it was with a faint attempt at a smile, that he stammered out:

"Pardon me, princess; but you are so—so like—a lady I once knew—that I—I was startled—" and he stopped, still staring at her.

Then the duke interposed, with his usual quiet smile:

"These resemblances are very singular, sometimes, senhor. Perhaps I also resemble some one you knew."

Sir Lumley turned and stared at him, and his strong lower jaw fell in an expression of fresh amazement, and something very like fear.

Diamantina called to Clarence.

"Doctor, here is another patient for you. This vile hot weather! I fear Sare Loulee is not well."

And indeed the Englishman looked as if he had a stroke of paralysis.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE KHEDIVE CLUB.

AMONG the other modern institutions of reconstructed Egypt none are more remarkable than the club-houses. Alexandria sports one of them, under the name of the "Mehemet Ali Club," founded by Prince Mehemet Tewfik, son of the first Khedive Ismail Pasha; while Cairo rejoices in the still larger and more flourishing "Khedive Club," built by the British Duke of Sutherland, and patronized by the fashion of Cairo, native and imported.

The Khedive Club boasts the names of half the aristocracy of Europe as honorary or visiting members, and a host of pashas, beys, bankers, merchants and other notables, as constant members. The Duke of Diamantina had belonged to it from its foundation, and his face was as well known there as that of any digni-

tary of Egypt, though he seldom made use of the *cuisine* of the club, and only used it for a morning lounging-place, where news circulated.

On the morning after his arrival in Cairo, Diamantina, tranquil and courteous as ever, strolled into the saloon, smoking a cigarette, and found a knot of Egyptian officers excitedly discussing a subject that seemed of great interest, for his arrival did not interrupt the conversation.

Halim Pasha, a gray-bearded old Albanian general, civilized by the contact of French manners, was laying down the law to Houdin Bey, a French renegade in the Khedive's service. All the officers spoke French, the Egyptian court language at present.

"I say that a man who forfeits his honor by a sharper's trick has no right to claim the courtesies of this club, monsieur; and I shall make my protest against it to the Executive Committee."

"My dear friend, do not be rash. You must remember that this Sare Lomlee is an English judge of the Bureau Civile, and holds the name unblemished."

"But just look at this," exclaimed the pasha, impatiently, and he struck his knuckles on a folded newspaper lying on his knee. "Here is the *Times*, the English paper of papers, that charges him directly with the dirty and mean crime of a petty theft."

"Pardon me, monsieur," here calmly interposed Diamantina, who had been putting his cigarette close by. "I heard the name of Sir Lomlee mentioned. Is it by chance the gentleman who is now here?"

"Ah, my dear duke, you are welcome," replied the old general, rising and cordially shaking hands. "Yes, it is this Lawton, this stiff Englishman, that we talk about! Hear this, monsieur, in the '*Bord du Nil*'* extracted from the English *Times*."

And the old officer began to read in French from a local Carienne paper what purported to be the translation of an extract from the London *Times*, as follows:

"A curious suit has just been begun in the Court of King's Bench, which recalls some of the darker and less excusable features of the suppression of the Indian Mutiny in 1857. Our older readers may remember that the Rajah of the Independent state of Krishnapoor was accused by Mr. (now Sir Lumley) Lawton, British Minister Resident at his court, of having taken part in the mutiny by a secret expedition under the guise of a hunting party, which ended in an attack on Sir James Outram's provision convoys and the extermination of half of the 17th Foot, guarding the convoy. The Rajah denied the charge, and offered to prove that he was a hundred miles away at the time of the attack, and that prisoners afterward taken confessed that Tantia Topee was the leader in that terrible massacre."

"As is well known in India, Sir Lumley (then Mr. Lawton) obtained access to Krishnapoor by a masterly stratagem, pretending friendship, and only arrested the treacherous Hindoo when the latter was fairly in his power."

Here Diamantina broke in with a sort of hiss, the nearest approach to a laugh in which he was ever known to indulge.

"They are droll, these English; are they not, pasha? The Englishman uses a 'masterly stratagem,' while the Hindoo is 'treacherous' before he is tried. Is it not droll?"

Houdin Bey shrugged his shoulders.

"What would you? The English have the power just now; they and those cursed Germans. *Sacerrre!*"

The Prussophobia of the Frenchman overpowered even his Anglophobia, and Halim Pasha grinned as he looked over his spectacles.

"Let me read on. The rest is still more droll for the English."

He continued:

"The Rajah was suddenly arrested in the evening by a detachment of Sikh Horse, and an effort was made at the same time to seize the Ranees, his wife, an Eurasian lady, with their only son, then a child in arms. This attempt was frustrated by the desperate fighting of a part of the Rajah's Guard headed by a Yankee-adventurer called Gilkavah by the Hindoos, who cut his way out of the city, carrying off the woman and infant. The Rajah was hurriedly tried by a court-martial, who found him guilty, and the Resident produced an order from the Viceroy ordering his execution by blowing from a cannon, the solitary instance in which this form of death was meted out to a Hindoo of rank. The sentence was carried into effect next day at noon in the public square of Krishnapoor."

"So much is familiar to all students of that bloody page in Indian history, but the strangest part of the story is yet to come. Here twenty years after the event comes into court a woman affirming herself to be the widow of the dead Rajah of Krishnapoor and claims that Sir Lumley Lawton not only forged the Viceroy's order for her husband's execution, but actually took private possession of all the jewels of the Rajah found on his body, especially a watch, made by Bellechasse Freres of Paris, which she avers to have seen in the possession of Sir Lumley's sister, alleged to have been ordered and paid for by Sir Lumley. This lady sues under the name of Effie Kalidasa, widow of Kalidasa, Rajah of Krishnapoor, and offers as witnesses the makers of the watch and some fifty prominent Indian officials who have seen it in the Hon. Miss Lawton's possession. This charge if proven will convict Sir Lumley of a very mean

form of embezzlement of public property, and if proven, will probably lead to his dismissal from her Majesty's Civil Service. The charge of forgery of the death-warrant is more obscure, as Lord Lawrence, who was Governor-General at the time, has been dead some years."

When Halim Pasha had finished reading he looked round him triumphantly.

"There, messieurs; that is the man that Colonel Hamilton, the British consul-general, introduces to the club and asks us to grant privileges to. I say I shall protest to the executive committee unless the name is withdrawn."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth when the men of whom they were speaking entered the room together, the consul-general speaking to Sir Lumley as they advanced.

"Ah, yes; deuced nice sort of place for such a beastly country, you know. Pretty fair cook—used to be in the 'Reform,' you know—I think you'll like the club while you're here. Never any trouble about names, my dear fellow. Your name would carry you anywhere. Hallo! I say! What's all this?"

The consul-general stuck his glass in his eye and stared at the bulletin board of the club, where the names of members proposed were usually posted for the period before voting on them.

In front of the board were grouped the Egyptian officers, headed by Halim Pasha, and that venerable and testy officer was deliberately pulling down Sir Lumley's name from the board.

"Hallo, I say, pasha, you know, this is no joke, you know," angrily exclaimed Colonel Hamilton, as he stepped forward.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ARTICLE.

THE old Albanian turned and glowered at him with his fiery eyes as he held out the paper pinned to the obnoxious article in the *Bord du Nil*, which had caused the trouble.

"There, monsieur," he said, shaking them angrily, "I've torn ze name, zat you may save your honneur. Do you comprehend, sare? Look at zat article, and say if zat is a name for dis club?"

Then with a flourish he slapped his breast and handed the papers to the amazed Englishman, repeating:

"I am responsable, sare."

And a dozen Egyptians, French and Italian officers slapped their breasts together, and cried:

"Ve are responsable, sare!"

The English consul-general was a large phlegmatic blonde, who wore a gold eyeglass, and had been a captain in the Guards before he took to diplomacy. He was as cool as a cucumber under fire, and this began to look like fire.

"Pray don't waste any unnecessary excitement, gentlemen," he remarked, in a tone of aggravating patronage. "You must be aware that my position prevents me from fighting in Egypt. What's the row?"

"Dis, sare; dis! Read 'em!"

And Halim Pasha thrust the paper into his hands, pointing to the article.

Meanwhile Sir Lumley Lawton, not quite comprehending what was the matter, for he had not seen the paper Halim Pasha had torn down, yet felt the sort of uneasiness a man experiences when he is made spectator of a quarrel.

At first he was disposed to laugh at the volatile excitement of the old pasha and his southern friends, but then his eyes fell on the Duke of Diamantina, who was sitting in a large cane arm-chair, lazily watching the fracas through the blue wreaths of his cigarette smoke.

They had not met since the previous day, when Sir Lumley had been taken so suddenly ill at the Diamantina mansion that the duke had been obliged to send him home in his own carriage. Since that time the once Resident of Krishnapoor had had time to compose his mind and features to meet Diamantina, and lay out a course of action for himself.

The cause of his illness was simple enough, and if the reader has not gathered it from the foregoing pages, it is soon told.

From some occult cause, the young Duke of Diamantina seemed to Sir Lumley to be nothing but the living portrait and identity of that very Rajah of Krishnapoor whom he had caused to be destroyed twenty years before. Had not Sir Lumley seen the mutilated fragments of that unhappy prince with his own eyes, he would have believed that the Rajah had escaped alive; but as it was, the duke seemed, to his remorse-haunted vision, to be nothing but an evil spirit that had taken the dead Kalidasa's shape.

He had made all sorts of inquiries about the duke since he left the Diamantina mansion, and had found his name well known and printed in the *Almanach de Gotha* the indispensable of European tuft-hunters.

There he was:—Vasco Vasquez, Count of Albuquerque, Marquis of Pombal, Duke of Diamantina, created in 1869, by Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil, ætas 23."

There was no possibility to Sir Lumley's mind that there could be any other connection than

that of a startling resemblance between this man, born in Brazil, and the child of Kalidasa, who would only be twenty-one if he were alive.

Sir Lumley resolved to make a friend of the duke and find who he was, for his own safety. One thing was certain: if the Princess Euphrosyne Melapetros had been twenty years younger, she might have passed to Sir Lumley for Edle Blackstone, the little Eurasian, who had cheated him at fifteen by marrying Kalidasa.

"It must be that they are the same," he muttered to himself now, as he looked at Diamantina and thought of the yesterday's meeting. "But if they are they can do me no harm. I'll cultivate this young duke and find out."

But while he was looking at the duke, and making up his mind, Colonel Hamilton was glancing rapidly over the paper; and just as Sir Lumley started toward Diamantina he was arrested by Hamilton's voice, saying in a grave tone:

"Look here, Lawton, here's something you ought to read. It's a beastly lie, of course. These confounded half-breed French editors always lie. But just read it, you know."

Sir Lumley, with a vague feeling of uneasiness, took the paper and began to glance over the translated article, while Hamilton with an appearance of unusual irritation for a man of his glacial temperament, began to curse the waiters for not bringing him the English *Times* at once.

"Where is it, you? Ali, Mehemet, Hassan, Francois, whatever is your infernal foreign name! I swear you confounded grinning French Greek monkeys are not fit to wait upon a gentleman, confound this beastly country! Give it here, you infernal Egyptian idiot you!"

He snatched the paper from the waiter's hand (said waiter was a Maltese, by the by) and ostentatiously turned his back on the Egyptian officers, with an appearance of rudeness that looked very much like premeditated insult.

The fact was that the Hon. Sidney Hamilton felt at that moment stung to the very heart with indignant shame for his countryman, and longed, Briton-like, to avenge it on any one of the grinning foreigners, jealous of English supremacy, who filled the club.

He did not believe that the article in the *Bord du Nil* came out of the *Times* at all. He was too familiar with the peculiar ways of Levantine journalism to doubt that this was some sort of a blackmailing attack, but all the same he remembered to have heard hints in India of foul play in "that unfortunate Krishnapoor affair" and the story about Lorelia's watch had been a common matter of mess-room scandal in Calcutta. It was characteristic of the utter and contemptuous disregard of right and wrong in dealing with Hindoos that marks the British population of India, that all these stories had never cost the Lawtons any social or official prestige. "So many things had to be winked at in the mutiny, you know."

Hamilton looked savagely through the *Times*, scanning page after page with the eye of an expert, till he came to the end, when he triumphantly folded it flat with a slap, and cried:

"There, pasha; I knew you couldn't trust those dirty blackmailing sheets they call papers in Cairo, got up by a parcel of French sneak-thieves and Yankee adventurers. That *Bord du Nil* has made a lie out of whole cloth, and, by Jove, I'll complain to his highness and have the paper stopped. There's no such article in the *Times*. It's all a lie."

Sir Lumley, who was reading the French journal with a face like gray marble and a firm set of the lower jaw, here forced a smile and tossed the paper on the floor, saying:

"By Jove, Hamilton, I didn't think these scoundrels had so much audacity. Where's this fellow's office? I shall have to give him a thrashing, I'm afraid."

"Leave him to me. I'll see if the Khedive allows English gentlemen to be insulted like this. By Jove, sir, if he's anything short of an Englishman, I'll have him bastinadoed, or I'll send for the ironclads at once."

Thus blustered Hamilton, anxious to save the credit of his country by prompt action, when he was arrested by a nasal voice which said:

"Don't sweat yourself, cunel. The French paper *didn't* lie. Here's the identical article in the *Times* the day before that one you have."

CHAPTER XIX.

A BRAZILIAN YANKEE.

THE speaker was a tall, thin, angular man, with sharp, clean-shaven face, large bones, and a general appearance of ungainly strength and shrewdness, while the tones of his voice were those of the old-fashioned down-East Yankee, now nearly extinct.

He was dressed in shiny black like a clergyman, and had been sitting quietly at a distant table, reading the very paper which he now held out with a grim smile to Colonel Hamilton.

Both the Englishmen stared at him in surprise, and Hamilton haughtily asked him:

"Who are you, sir? I don't think I have the honor of your acquaintance."

"Waal," returned the American, coolly, "I was one of the founders of this club—before your time, cunel, and if you want to see my

* "The Nile Bank."

† Eurasian. Children of mixed European-Asiatic race are thus named in India.

name you kin compare this card and the members' roll-book at your leisure."

He handed the Englishman a small card on which was written

"DOM GIL GRABADOR,
Commandante Navio Bresiliano."

Hamilton stared at him amazedly. He had often seen the tall form and black beard of Dom Gil, but that individual spoke execrable English while this man's face was clean-shaven, his grammar pure, and only his pronunciation nasal.

"But you are not a Brazilian," he at length ejaculated.

"Why not, cunel? My commission is every whit as straight as yours, and 'Pedro R.' makes just as pretty a signature as 'Victoria R.', to my notions. If I choose to turn my Boston name into Portuguese, I've just as good a right as all the French Huguenots that went into England with William of Orange to make themselves English. Haven't I?"

"I don't dispute the right, sir," was the cold reply of Hamilton. "Your name may be Smith or Brown for all I care."

"But it's neither, as it happens, cunel, and I'll trouble you to remember it," retorted the Yankee, a faint flush tinging his cheekbones. "Here's the *Times*, with the article quoted in the *Bord du Nil*, and I guess the Khedive won't have to bastinado one editor this morning. I've been an editor myself, cunel, in a place where I had to write with a revolver in each boot and a bowie down the back of my neck; and I never took water yet on a statement of fact; and what's more, if this French editor's of my mind, he won't do it either—not this time."

Hamilton had taken the paper from his hands as he began this little speech and did not attempt to stop his volubility, for his eyes had already caught the head-lines which told him the American spoke truly.

As for Sir Lumley Lawton, now that there was an open attack on him, he assumed the appearance of iron calm which distinguished him at most times, and folded his arms to await Hamilton's report.

It was noticeable that, now the cold Northern races had met in open collision, the excitable and swarthy Egyptians and French had drawn themselves out of the quarrel, and were looking on, listening with hushed interest. Even testy old Halim Pasha had been silenced by Hamilton's first furious denunciation of the *Bord du Nil* and his threat to appeal to the Khedive.

The only quiet and unconcerned spectator seemed to be the Duke of Diamantina, who sat in his cane arm-chair, blowing rings of cigarette smoke and watching the scene with a keenness that nothing escaped.

Meantime Colonel Hamilton read the English article from end to end, with a countenance in which keen mortification struggled with the British sense of justice. A Frenchman would have refused to look at anything, an Italian would have torn up the paper; but the *Times* was the sacred representative of British respectability to Hamilton, and he could not doubt but that the *Times* had printed the article.

When he had finished, he turned to Sir Lumley and observed in a dissatisfied tone:

"You'll have to look to this, Lawton. It's evident somebody's put up this woman to personate the Ranees and black-mail you. I'm sorry you couldn't have got home sooner to nip it in the bud."

Sir Lumley took the paper and looked at it himself with unmoved face till he had mastered its sense, when he said coolly:

"This will shorten my stay here. I have only to go home to crush all this rascally conspiracy. I see this club is a terribly mixed affair, old fellow. I suppose your position compels you to belong to it; but, by Jove, I couldn't afford to come here every day to meet a lot of cads. Ah, duke, is that you? Charmed to see you, I'm sure. You must dine with us before we leave Cairo. Can't give you such luxuries as you have, you know, but a hearty English welcome we can promise for yourself and your friends."

So saying, he bowed low to the duke, stuck on his hat ostentatiously before the Egyptian officers, lighted a cigar, sneering openly at them all, and then walked quietly to the door, twirling his cane as he went and whistling.

Hamilton followed his example to the letter. The colonel was too much used to the swagger and bluster required in dealing with Orientals to be at all backward in bullying the Egyptians, and there was no one else to bully, for Dom Gil, the Yankee Brazilian, had quietly withdrawn to the table, at which he had been taking his coffee and paper together, and seemed to be once more absorbed in the news.

Thus the Englishmen might have been said to come off with flying colors out of the club, and so the Duke of Diamantina quietly remarked to Halim Pasha:

"Those English are devils, but they are no cowards," the stout Albanian veteran admitted. "I could almost have laughed at the bold bearing of that Sare Lomlee; but, thank Heaven, the club is rid of him."

"Here comes another of the race," observed

Diamantina, as Captain O'Shea, rubicund and jolly as ever, entered the club-room.

But the captain appeared to be an old *habitué* of the club, as indeed he was, owing to his frequent journeys to and fro from India, for the purchase of Government stores. He shook hands with Halim Pasha, talked vile Irish-French or worse Arabic to the other officers, and seemed to be hail-fellow-well-met with all.

"Ha, duke," he broke out, the moment he saw Diamantina, "I just met that murderin' old villain, Lawton. Did ye see the blast the *Times* gave him? bad luck to him! He's got a face on him like as if he was goin' to a funeral and hadn't been asked to the wake. By the powers, it does my heart good to see him. Now that vinegary old maid 'll maybe have to give up that watch she stole, bad luck to her."

Diamantina blew a long curl of smoke ere he replied.

"Do not be too sure, my dear sir. Sir Lumley is rich yet and the English courts are not kind to those poor devils of Hindoos."

"Ah, ye don't know English ways, your grace. The poor Ranees may never get any satisfaction out of the villain, but ye'll see they'll send him to Coventry in England for this."

"My dear sir," responded Diamantina, lazily, "as you say, I do not know the ways of the English. What is this Coventry you mention?"

"Coventry! Well, your grace, it's a very disagreeable place to visit. When a man gets there, no one will speak to him, and he might as well be dead as alive."

"This must be a charming residence, this Coventry," observed the duke, with another puff. "I am obliged to you for the information, capitan. Have you seen Senhor Hart this morning, sir?"

"Once; and he seemed to be full of business; for he was running round in the sun hunting up some one."

"Thank you, sir."

The duke threw away the last remains of his cigarette and walked to the window, passing by Dom Gil, who was still absorbed by the news. As he passed he dropped a few words in a low voice to the other, who paid no apparent attention to them, and then strolled into the billiard-room, leaving O'Shea talking to the Egyptians.

Presently Dom Gil got up, placed a tall stove-pipe hat on his head, and walked out past O'Shea, who stared in his face with some wonder, but no sign of recognition.

The Yankee's face was so changed by the clerical attire and tall hat from the physiognomy of Dom Gil that O'Shea was quite excusable for asking Halim Pasha:

"Who's that, general? Bedad he looks like Death come out of the grave for a holiday."

But Halim Pasha professed his own ignorance. He had not seen the card given to Hamilton, who had put it in his pocket, and, like all the rest, had failed to recognize Dom Gil; so that the attempt ended in idle conjecture.

Then, when some one proposed to ask Diamantina, they discovered that the duke had left the club, and had been seen driving away on the new road across the bridge to the Pyramids of Ghizeh, the regular drive for fashionable visitors.

CHAPTER XX.

AN EGYPTIAN EDITOR.

In the meantime Dom Gil Grabador, after leaving his club, continued his way, with a tranquillity undisturbed by his unsuitable attire (the thermometer stood at 98° in the shade) to the business quarter of the Ezbekiah, where he entered a building full of offices and tapped at the door of a little back room, which bore the legend, "*Bord du Nil—Bureau d'Editeur*," which in English is simply, "THE NILE BANK—EDITOR'S OFFICE."

"Entrez!" said a voice, and Dom Gil found himself in the sanctum of the editor of that influential journal which had caused such a commotion in the Khedive Club.

The editor was a pale, keen-looking, middle-aged man, with a gray mustache and a general air of overwork, incident to performing the duties of proof-reader, leader-writer, advertising agent, reporter and book-keeper in one, in the city of Cairo in May—with the arduous office of bill-collector thrown in. He had told Dom Gil to enter in French, but it was in unmistakable New York slang that he greeted him when the other was fairly inside.

"Well, old fellow, what's the racket now? Spit her out quick, for I'm in a devil of a hurry to catch the mail." And he scribbled away.

Dom Gil allowed his grim features to relax into a smile as he said:

"Let the mail wait. I've got a check to your order, Frankly."

George W. Frankly, editor in chief of the *Bord du Nil*, threw down his pen and positively laughed as he turned to Dom Gil, though the tears were in his eyes as he did so.

"Well, by Jove, that's a thing I've not seen for months. Running a paper in Cairo ain't what it's cracked up to be, old fellow. I was just sending a line home to the old *Spy*, to ask for the position of Egyptian and Levantine cor-

respondent, to keep the wolf from the door. What's it for, old boy?"

"Call it 'political services,' and pass it to your account," was the evasive reply, as Dom Gil passed over the check he had mentioned to the other.

Frankly looked at it in amazement and joy.

"Two hundred liras! Smith and Brown, bankers! Why, what's this for?"

"For an article in your last paper about India. Smith and Brown are interested in a little claim on the British Government, and your article hit the nail on the head. Keep it up, Frankly, and I'll bring you such another next week."

Frankly looked hesitatingly at the check and asked:

"What article do you mean? That Lawton business? I only copied that."

"Exactly. But for all that, Colonel Hamilton and Lawton himself were nearly coming down to interview you with a big stick about it."

Frankly laughed. He was a thin, wiry man with a firm chin, and ears set very close to his head, one of the type that prize-fighters call "game to the backbone."

"They might run on a snag if they tried that, Gibby," he remarked. "Do you remember the time we used to do the local business down in Galveston, before the war? Those Texans make an Englishman seem like a whale in shoal water, beside them. But go on. What am I to do?"

"Keep this up; that's all. There will be a heavy pressure on you to disavow any agreement with that article in your next issue. When do you come out?"

"To-morrow."

"Exactly. Well, we want you to indorse the article in an editorial, and bluff off the Englishman if he comes. If you do this, you'll get another check next week."

Frankly hesitated again.

"Perhaps you don't know what you're asking. As long as I copy the *Times* and keep a still mouth, I'm permitted to starve in decent quiet, but if I express an editorial opinion, I lay myself liable to a visit from the police and seizure of the edition."

"As far as that goes, my people will see that the Khedive does not interfere with you. The edition will sell like wild-fire, and if you want the leader and the facts, here are both of them."

And Dom Gil pulled out a little roll of paper and handed it to the other, who ran over it with the practiced eye of an exchange editor.

When he had finished he shook his head.

"Won't do, Gil. I'd like to oblige you, but that's too strong. Why, they could have me up for libel in any court in the world."

"Well, suppose they do, and you have a backer to pay the costs and see you through. How much will you take to fight it out?"

Frankly considered a moment.

"The risk's worth at least twenty thousand dollars, and I should have to leave the country in the end. You don't know how strong the English are here."

"Then here is something will satisfy you on all points," said Dom Gil, quietly. "Remember it's in confidence and only to secure you in case you have any doubts."

He handed Frankly a letter which the other read slowly, two or three times, before he said a word in answer.

Then he turned on Dom Gil a face in which a great deal of emotion was manifest and replied to the other's look of inquiry:

"Yes, Gibby, I'll do it. I never dreamed of this."

"And yet you might have known, if you hadn't been a regular old duffer, George," retorted Dom Gil, with forced jocularity, two suspicious drops standing in the corner of his eyes. "I wouldn't put you in a hole for all the money in Asia. Will you pitch into Lawton now?"

"By the great horn spoon which Nebuchadnezzar used for his mush and milk, I'll scarify that old villain so that he'll leave Egypt. You see if I don't."

And the editor of the *Bord du Nil* tucked the check into his pocket, seized his pen, and plunged into his work as Dom Gil left the office.

CHAPTER XXI.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

THE little trouble at the Khedive Club did not affect Sir Lumley Lawton to any great outward extent. He had been in a measure prepared for it by the unexpected meeting with the Princess Euphrosyne Melapetros, and he had no doubt in his own mind that she and the lost Ranees of Krishnapoor were one and the same person. The very name, "Melapetros," was a mere Greek translation for the maiden name under which she had passed in India; for it meant "Black Stone" (or Rock).

How well he remembered Effie Blackstone in those old days before the mutiny! She was one of those unfortunate beings in Indian society, occupying almost the same position once held by our own octoroons, though not accompanied by the legal taints of slavery and bastardy.

Her father, Ensign Blackstone of the Forty-second Foot (of the famous "Black Watch" of

Fontenoy), had, while yet a raw "Griff" (greenhorn), fallen madly in love with a native girl. Worse than that, he had actually married her under the sanction of a Wesleyan missionary who had educated poor Luchmee from the time she was thrown as an infant into the Ganges for the crocodiles, whence he rescued her, to the day she became, to her simple wonder and delight, a real "Sahib's lady."

Poor Luchmee! hers was a history rarely met with outside of India. Who were her parents, was problematical. All the missionary knew of her was that he saw her floating by in a basket one morning, like Moses in the old pictures, with the addition of a dozen crocodiles coming after her, scenting prey. At the risk of his life the worthy man had fished her out, just in time to cheat the crocodiles, took her home to his wife, and both accepted the little brown maid as a gift from Heaven; one *bona fide* convert to Christianity.

That Luchmee, beautiful like all her beautiful race, talking English well, and having all the education of a white girl in the same station, should be a bewitching creature even to English officers, is not surprising; and the Latharios of at least a dozen marching regiments and two crack cavalry corps had laid siege to her whenever garrison duty called them to Modbad, where Missionary Wilson labored.

But inasmuch as their intentions were in no case honorable, and Mrs. Wilson was a very dragon of watchfulness, no one succeeded, till young Malcolm Blackstone, with the scent of the heather still in his hair, came, like a green, honest country lad as he was, married Luchmee after a three days' courtship, and realized, within three days more, that he had made a terrible and fatal mistake.

Not a lady in the garrison would visit his new wife; and most of them refused even to recognize himself. His comrades were cool and distant, and made his position so uncomfortable that he was glad to resign and go into civil employment at Allahabad, where Effie was born. Poor Luchmee did not know how she was ostracised, for the simple reason that she never had mingled with any Europeans except her foster-parents, and therefore did not miss their society; but her husband, who had all the sensitiveness of a poor and proud man, was cut to the heart at finding himself relegated to the companionship of Hindoos, among whom he was disliked and suspected. He loved his beautiful child-wife (Luchmee was a woman at fourteen and wed at fifteen), and always treated her with tenderness; but when she died, after a year of married life, leaving baby Effie behind her, it is questionable whether her husband did not feel a certain sense of relief.

His position in English society was now capable of betterment, and he soon found himself rising in the civil service, owing to the knowledge of natives and their languages obtained by him from the circumstances of his marriage. Effie, therefore, grew up in a nomadic sort of way, owing to the frequent and rapid transfers of her father from post to post all over India, till by the time she was a full-grown woman of fourteen (in India equal to eighteen or twenty in Europe) she could talk a dozen languages fluently, read a little English, play a little on the guitar, sing and dance divinely; though the multiplication table was a mystery to her.

Then it was that Lumley Lawton, a married man himself, set his cold, cruel eyes on her and coveted her. He saw her social position anomalous, like that of her mother, no white lady recognizing her, while the men paid her a questionable respect, tinged with a licentious devotion that only failed to hurt her on account of her utter innocence of all guile. Her father, immersed in business, bent only on making money with which to leave India, saw little of his child and left her exposed to all sorts of dangers, unsuspecting their nature.

Lumley Lawton was then a civil service man, ostensibly occupying the post of secretary to the Rajah of Krishnapoor, really a paid spy on that gallant young prince. Two years before the outbreak of the mutiny he was offered by the British Government the post of Resident minister at the court which the Rajah eagerly urged him to accept, on the ground that he preferred an old friend to a new face, and almost at the same time the Rajah wooed and won Effie Blackstone, for whose sweet sake he consented to abjure polygamy and be married in Christian fashion by the same devoted Methodist missionary who had been the only grandfather Effie ever knew.

Well did Sir Lumley call all this to mind as he sat in the smoking-room at Shepherd's Hotel, looking out into the glare of the Egyptian sunlight, through the crevices of the blinds and thinking over the past. Well did he remember the day, just after the massacre of Cawnpore, when he had tried to induce Effie to leave her husband and flee to Calcutta, promising to secure her the Rajah's treasures and a brilliant life in England as his own wife. He was a widower by this time, his only daughter, Helen, a baby in England, his son, Owen, at Eton; and he could have kept his word.

He told her that the Rajah's sympathies were with the rebels, and that it would be easy to

trump up a charge against him in the excited state of English feeling, and moreover that Kalidasa was away on a pretended hunting expedition at that very time.

The rebuff that was given him by the Ranee stung him even now, twenty years after the date, as he sat brooding over it in Cairo.

She told him that a single hair of Kalidasa's head was dearer to her than all he could offer her, that she had hated him from the first moment she saw him, and that if he did not leave the palace that moment she would summon the guards and have his head taken off, if it cost her life and kingdom.

"But I paid him up for it," muttered Sir Lumley, to himself; "and as for the death-warrant, Lord Lawrence winked at the irregularities and the statute of limitations bars the rest. I've nothing to fear."

Even while he spoke he heard the loud, rollicking tones of O'Shea in the passage, coming toward the room and talking to some one.

CHAPTER XXII.

FATHER AND SON.

"DOM GIL? Divil a one o' me's seen him. What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing; only I want to meet him very much, O'Shea," replied the voice of a stranger, and into the room came O'Shea and a young man in the semi-Oriental dress affected by Europeans in Egypt.

They glanced over at Sir Lumley, who was dimly visible in the darkened room, and the young man lowered his voice.

"Do you remember what I told you about my uncle, O'Shea?"

"Yes, Gilkavah, ye mean?"

"The same. Dom Gil's the man."

"D'ye mean it now?"

"I'm sure of it. I've been hunting over a dictionary and find that Grabador is merely a translation of Carver."

"Whisht!" answered O'Shea, suddenly nudging him and jerking his thumb toward Sir Lumley. "Don't ye see who's yonder? Come this way."

And they left the room before the English baronet could catch any more, and went down the passage conversing low and earnestly.

"There's that cursed Irishman," muttered Lawton to himself. "I was a fool to buy his silence with a commission, when a dangerous errand among the mutineers might have rid me of his tongue and himself. If he and the Ranee put their heads together they may make that watch affair look ugly for me. I wish Owen was here."

Sir Lumley began to realize that he was past his prime, and to lean for help in emergencies on his son's stern will and more active frame. He felt lonely on this hot day in Cairo, the more so that Helen and Lorelia were sleeping away the noontime up-stairs, and the hotel was deserted save by a few perspiring waiters.

He rose and went over to the telegraph office, where the operator was dozing in his chair.

"Anything for me?"

"You? let me see, sir—what name?"

"Sir Lumley Lawton."

Positively he felt reluctant to say it aloud in Cairo, since that article in the *Bord du Nil*.

The operator looked up at him in a startled, interested way, as if he too had heard the name, and answered:

"Yes, sir. Here's a telegram from Aden for you."

Sir Lumley tore open the envelope and read with eager delight:

"Coaling finished. Shall be in Cairo on the 27th. Meet you at the club. OWEN."

Then his face fell, and he began to gnaw his under lip. Owen was to meet him at the club: that very club which had refused to give him the usual courtesies that morning. He must manage to intercept him before he got there.

"What time does the train from Suez get in here?" he asked the clerk at the desk of the hotel, as that worthy individual dozed in the heat.

The clerk woke up confusedly.

"Train to Suez? Yes, sir. Six P. M."

"No, no, from Suez here I mean," said Sir Lumley, impatiently.

"Oh, yes, sir. Beg pardon, sir. Two trains. One leaves Suez at daylight, gets here 10:55 A. M. Other's the night train—10:40 P. M. Carries mail, sir. Very few passengers. P. and O. people all come in morning train."

"Thank you."

Sir Lumley turned away to look at his telegram.

"Shall be in Cairo on the 27th. That's—what day of the month is this?"

To the clerk this, in his usual quick, snappish way.

"The twenty-seventh, sir, Monday."

"To-day?"

Sir Lumley felt the sweat run down his face. Owen must be here already, and must have gone to the club. By this time he knew all; must have seen the obnoxious paper, perhaps had quarreled with some one about it.

"Why didn't I get this telegram sooner?" he

asked, fiercely, of the operator, anxious to vent his spleen on some one.

"It was marked 'to be called for,' sir. I didn't know you by sight. I'm not to blame. It's been lying here two days or more."

Sir Lumley growled out something very like a profane malediction and went rapidly out of the hotel, taking the direction of the Khedive Club, quite regardless of the heat.

Some hundreds of donkey boys, seeing an Englishman, marked him for their lawful prey and came down like a swarm of locusts, shouting:

"Donkey, howadji! Berry good! Run like deer! Backshish, howadji!"

They supplemented their broken English with a long string of Arabic curses and jeers, on the generally safe idea that the howadji would understand the English and take the Arabic for compliments.

But Sir Lumley was in no mood to stand their noise, and he laid about him so fiercely with his stick, with a shower of Arabic epithets as bad as their own, that the whole tribe fled in dismay, calling to one another that this was a devil, not a quiet howadji. He understood them.

Then the Englishman pursued his way in peace, and the first person he met descending the steps of the club was the Duke of Diamantina.

Never so strongly as at that moment did the fatal likeness to the dead Rajah strike Sir Lumley as he looked at the duke, courteous and smiling, the brilliant beauty of his dark aquiline features set off by the broad shadow of his turbaned hat, his white costume of faultless purity. The ex-Resident of Krishnapoor could have sworn Kalidasa stood before him.

The duke was going to his carriage, which waited for him, and he lifted his hat with his usual bland smile as he passed Sir Lumley.

A sudden impulse made the older man speak to him, bluntly and abruptly:

"I know who you are. What do you want of me, Kalidasa?"

Diamantina raised his eyebrows in polite surprise.

"Sir Lumley Lawton! I want of you? My dear sir, you must be careful: this sun is very dangerous. Your eye looks wild: you will have a stroke. You must go home. My man shall drive you. Nay, nay, my dear sir, I insist."

And before Sir Lumley could resist, the duke half-led, half-pushed him to the carriage, repeating:

"The doctor said it was a case of very nearly sunstroke yesterday, and you are not quite right in your head yet. My dear sir, you must get in. I will take no denial. Pedro shall drive you back to the hotel at once, and then you must lie down."

But here Sir Lumley at last broke out, impatiently:

"I tell you I'm as well as you are. Have you seen my son Captain Lawton in the club? That's all I ask."

"Captain Lawton?" asked the duke, meditatively, as if trying to recollect.

"Yes, Captain Owen Lawton, Royal British Navy," retorted the father, in the same exasperated tone. "Have you seen him to-day?"

"My dear sir, let me think. I see so many people. Captain Lawton, the son of the distinguished Sir Lumley? I think I have. Yes, sir, I have seen the gentleman in the Red Sea. Miss Helena will tell you how he fired a shell at the yacht, when his sister was on board. It was a mistake, you know, my good sir."

"But have you seen him to-day, I ask?" Sir Lumley's patience, never great, was giving way, and his tone was fierce.

The duke stepped back a pace, looking at the Englishman sidewise with the same provoking smile on his face, extracted a cigarette-case from his pocket, opened it, and proffered it to Sir Lumley.

"Will you not smoke, sir? The tobacco is from my own plantation in the Vuelta Abajo. It has the true flavor."

"No. I don't want to smoke. Since you will not answer me, I'll ring the bell. Good-day, duke."

"Good-day, my dear sir."

The duke lifted his hat with his sweetest smile, while Sir Lumley ascended the steps of the club-house and rung the bell. The smile became one of triumphant meaning a moment later as Diamantina stepped into his carriage and was whirled away.

As for Sir Lumley, his task was sufficiently embarrassing. He had to ask for his son in a club from which he had been virtually expelled that very morning; and it was with a burning face and in a low tone that he asked the waiter, who opened the door, whether Captain Lawton was in the club. As he spoke, he slipped a piece of silver into the man's hand.

The waiter became confidential in a moment. He would not have been a club waiter if he had not known every item of scandal about the place.

"Yes. Captain Lawton was in. He was one of the original members. The gentlemen had kept from him the trouble in the paper. He came in that very morning, soon after Sir Lumley

ley left, and there had been some talk between him and the Duke of Diamantina in a private parlor with some friends. Would monsieur like to see the captain at once?"

"No; tell him I'm at Shepherd's, and that I want to see him as soon as he can come over; that's all."

The waiter bowed silent thanks for a second *douceur*, and went to Captain Lawton, whom he found in close confabulation with no less a person than Colonel Hamilton.

He delivered his message in the proper confidential style, and Owen remarked to Hamilton in a low, bitter tone:

"You see: the poor old governor's losing his hold. He was afraid to come in and see me. By Jove, Hamilton, I'll call out the whole club, man after man, but what I'll have satisfaction for this cowardly insult. I'll—"

"Better get through with the one on hand, first," remarked Hamilton, in a tone of grim jocularity. "That fellow's a rattler with the foils, I'm told."

"We don't use the small sword. I have the choice; and I chose sabers. I can cut any infernal foreigner that ever wore hair all to pieces with that, or I wouldn't be where I am, now."

Owen Lawton stretched his long limbs and rose up, looking as fine and stalwart a specimen of the British naval officer as one would wish to see.

"Well, good-by, Hamilton; you'll let me have what you promised," he said, aloud, and the brother Briton nodded compliance with an "All right, old boy."

Owen lost no time in hurrying to Shepherd's, where he found his father waiting anxiously in the smoking-room, whence the two proceeded to a parlor and locked themselves in.

"Now, sir, in the first place, please don't hesitate to enter that club to see me, any more," began Owen, with his arm round Sir Lumley's neck. "You shall come into that club whenever you like, and I'll pitch the first man out of the window that offers so much as to look askance at you. I've been to the executive committee and insisted that they shall strike the *Bord du Nil* off the list of club papers; and if that infernal editor dares to say another word on his own responsibility, I'll cut his ears off. Is that plain?"

The tears came into Sir Lumley's eyes; for the strain of public opprobrium began to tell on him heavily at fifty-five.

"God bless you, Owen. God bless you, my boy. I could stand it for myself, but I tremble if Helen hears any of this."

"She needn't, sir. Tell aunt Lora to keep the *Bord du Nil* away. That's the only paper has republished the *Times* article here. We'll make them sweat for this when we get home."

"Oh, yes, yes, of course," returned Sir Lumley, hastily. "They've no sort of ground for an action, Owen; and, besides that, the King's Bench has no jurisdiction over Indian affairs. It's a mere blackmailing scheme of some people in England, who think they have got a hold on me in that Krishnapoor business."

"Of course, sir. I know that. The Rancee's dead, long ago; isn't she?"

"Of course, Owen. Don't you see, my boy, the infernal artfulness of this whole scheme? The Rancee's dead, and probably some woman of intrigue has got hold of her watch. It was the mate of Lora's, you know. The Rajah and I had them made at the same time, and he gave his to his wife; I mine to my sister. Your poor mother had been dead a few months, then, and I felt that I cared for nothing more in life. The whole of this business hangs on those watches, and you'll see it."

Owen nodded, well satisfied.

"Of course, sir. No need of giving me any explanation. The Rancee's dead, and so's the Rajah's brat, Kalidasa. I only wish we had the money they hid away from us."

"We have some of it, Owen," observed Sir Lumley, with a chuckle.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CODE OF HONOR.

"WELL, sir," observed Owen at this moment, rising and looking at his watch. "I fear I can't dine with you. I have a little appointment for the afternoon, and expect a carriage every moment."

"Where, Owen?" asked his father, in surprise.

"Only a drive, sir," answered the captain, evasively. "I'll be back about half an hour after sunset, surely."

"Which direction do you drive, Owen? If you like, I'll go with you."

"Well, thank you, sir, but on this occasion I'd rather not. I shall have company, and I don't want to expose you to the sun. You can't stand it as I can, sir."

"Oh, very well, Owen," was the rather offended reply; "as you please. I'll not force my company on you. By the by—"

Here Sir Lumley turned sharply on his son and snapped out:

"Why didn't you tell me you knew the Duke of Diamantina?"

"Why not, sir? Because I don't."

"Don't know him?"

"Not except for a casual introduction at sea, sir."

"A pretty sort of casual introduction, Owen, when he saved your sister's life. Didn't you hear the story?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I shall always be as polite to the duke as our position in the world requires."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, sir, you may be Lord Loughborough any day in the week, as soon as my uncle Owen dies, and I shall be the Hon. Owen Lawton. Surely an English peer's the equal of any beggarly Brazilian that ever wore shoe-leather, I hope."

Sir Lumley grunted assent to this truly British speech and Owen went on:

"This life-saving business is all very romantic, you know, sir, and all that sort of thing; but it won't do to have a parcel of beggarly foreign dukes coming after my sister, you know: will it?"

"But, to tell the truth, Owen, *this* duke's not a beggar by any means. In fact, he's quite—"

"I know, I know, sir. He has money enough somewhere, and behaves like a gentleman. I don't object to associating with him at the club, you know—"

"What were you talking about, then, you and he, at the club?" asked Sir Lumley, suddenly remembering the waiter's story.

Owen looked steadily at his father.

"I never saw him, sir."

"Never saw him! Why, the club waiter says he saw you go into a private room with the duke and some of his friends."

"The club waiter was drunk or lying, sir. But come, it's time I was off. Good-by, sir."

"Owen," interrupted Sir Lumley, catching his son by the arm, "you're going to fight a duel with the duke. Don't deny it. I see it plainly. He pretended he'd not seen you, and you pretend you've not seen him, when I know you both saw each other. What's it all about?"

"What's all what about, sir?"

"Come: don't pretend innocence. I've been out myself, young man. Is it about this club affair?"

"No, sir, nothing to do with it."

"Is it about Helen or me?"

"Nothing of the sort, sir."

"Is it about this watch story?"

"No, sir. I must say that the duke publicly expressed his belief that the whole story was false, and as publicly announced that he was your friend."

Sir Lumley looked perfectly stunned for a moment, from causes that Owen did not understand.

"Did he say he disbelieved it, and that he was my friend?"

"Certainly he did, sir, before Halim Pasha, Hamilton and a dozen others. It was very handsome in him, I must say."

"Then what in the name of all that's wonderful, are you going to fight about, Owen?"

"I've not admitted we are going to do anything of the kind, sir."

"Oh! Confound your honorable code, boy! What have you *differed* with Diamantina about?"

"Well, sir, he took offense at my firing a shot over his yacht to bring him to. I apologized for it."

"Well, that ended it; didn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what else had you to *differ* about, Owen?"

"Helen, sir."

"Helen!"

"Yes, sir. He took offense at my asking Helen to leave the yacht and come aboard the *Snapper*. She didn't come anyhow; but he insisted that my request was a reflection on his honor, and by Jove I couldn't give him any apology for that, you know, so—"

"You fight to-night: is it so?" asked Sir Lumley, eagerly.

Owen was silent.

Then the elder man went up to the younger and pressed his arm close.

"Owen," he said, in a low, grating voice, "you must kill that man."

Owen started.

"Kill him, sir? Nay, I only mean to slash him a little. He saved Helen and my aunt after all. I don't want to fight him, to tell the truth; but he insists on it."

"Nevertheless, Owen, you must kill the Duke of Diamantina, if you can," said Sir Lumley, firmly.

Owen stared at his father in great surprise, and hesitated for several moments before he answered:

"I can hardly do that, sir, without creating a scandal. It's foreign to the Code, you see, and we're fighting strictly on the point of honor."

Sir Lumley uttered a harsh and disagreeable laugh.

"Points of honor and Codes! Do you remember that this is 1877, boy? What have we to do with Codes? Do you mean to say you're going to let him kill you?"

"By no means, sir."

"Then what do you mean?"

"Simply this, sir. I came to Cairo to meet the duke. If I had not, he would have posted me. He's the challenger, and I'm going to give him a lesson for forcing a quarrel on me. But I can't kill him. Remember he saved Helen and aunt Lora. It wouldn't be the thing, you know."

Sir Lumley smiled in a grim and disagreeable way.

"May I ask then how you're going to give him the lesson you speak of?"

"Certainly, sir. I've chosen sabers for weapons. I never met the man I was afraid to tackle with them, and I intend to give the duke such a cut as will keep him from challenging any more English officers with their national weapon."

The baronet compressed his lips in an ill-tempered way.

"Well, Owen, all I can say is, you're a bigger fool than I thought. In a duel, always kill your man if you can. Good-by."

"Good-by, sir."

Father and son parted a little stiffly. Sir Lumley felt keenly disappointed at his failure to induce his son to commit murder under the guise of a duel, and Owen felt hurt at his father's apparent indifference to his danger.

The fact was that Sir Lumley did not dare to expose his motive to his son. He felt as helpless as a prisoner chained to the stake for torture. He dared not tell any one what he knew, that the Duke of Diamantina was young Kalidasa, the rightful Prince of Krishnapoor. To do so would be to acknowledge a foundation for the rumors he was denying so strenuously. Especially did he shrink from letting his children know the truth. They had always respected him, and he could not bear to forfeit their respect.

He watched Owen in silence as he left the parlor and went into the street and saw him enter a waiting carriage and drive away with Colonel Hamilton, the outline of whose figure he caught through the glass.

Then, full of uneasiness, he strolled away from the hotel, heedless of the sun, buried in his own gloomy thoughts, till he found himself in the bazaars, the only cool place in all Cairo on that scorching day.

Here he managed to while away part of the afternoon till the calls of the muezzins from the minarets warned him that the hour for evening prayer was come, and with it the coolness of sunset, which invited him to return to Shepherd's.

The band was playing in the park of the Ezbekiah as he came back; the streets were full of people; the watering-carts were jolting along; Egyptian boys and pashas were taking their evening canter; and all Cairo was out, when the old diplomat walked back through the streets to Shepherd's; almost the only Frank on foot in sight.

He caught the glances of more than one of the haughty mounted officers cast on him as they passed with an expression of curiosity, and noticed that he was the subject of comment and conversation, which his now morbid fancy interpreted to his own disadvantage.

The hue of his sunburnt face deepened to crimson, and he turned his head angrily away as he trudged on to the hotel; but, once on the steps, he turned proudly round, as if to face all the world and defy it.

As he had expected, he found several Egyptian officers looking at and pointing to him as they passed; for club scandal flies quickly in Egypt.

Clenching his hands angrily, and looking sternly back at them, every eye turned from his, and the rude equestrians rode on, abashed.

Then he heard the rapid patter of hoofs and saw a lady and gentleman on horseback coming down the street, rather an unusual sight in Cairo till within the last few years.

Something in the outline of the figures struck him as familiar, and brought the blood from his face to his heart, leaving him of a gray pallor.

Then they dashed by, the gentleman lifting his white helmet hat in the most marked and stately courtesy, while the lady bowed with equally public recognition to the amazed baronet.

Sir Lumley involuntarily, with the mechanical instinct of early breeding, doffed his broad turban hat and stood bareheaded in the sunset, as if a king and queen were passing by. His eyes could not leave them whether he would or no, and he stood staring after them like a man in a dream till they were lost in the crowd of vehicles and equestrians going eastward.

It was not yet sunset.

Owen had promised to be back by this time, and yet he was nowhere visible.

But the unhappy father had but just seen, with his own eyes, his son's antagonist, the Duke of Diamantina, alive, unhurt, gay and debonnaire, riding by with the Princess Melapetros, as if duels were things utterly unknown in the world of riches to which they belonged.

Their appearance at that moment seemed to stamp itself on Sir Lumley Lawton's brain with the distinctness of a photograph. He

could see them both, by all means the handsomest pair in Cairo.

The princess, whom he knew to be thirty-six, looked like the duke's sister, in her tight riding habit, English style, with its tall hat and veil.

Diamantina, in a white riding dress of severe simplicity, looked, as he was, a perfect cavalier; and even in their rapid passage, Sir Lumley noted the extraordinary beauty of their animals, dark chestnut mares without spot or blemish of any sort, the flower of Fyzoul Abdallah's stud. He had heard the history of their escape from Helen, and all Cairo was raving about Al Sabok and the two mares.

Then Sir Lumley started, to find himself bareheaded, gazing after the duke; and he hastily clapped on his hat and went into the hotel.

As soon as he made his appearance in the office, the clerk, now wide awake and full of business, accosted him respectfully:

"Letter for you, Sir Lumley—Colonel Hamilton left it. Said it needed no answer, sir."

With fingers that trembled in spite of themselves, Sir Lumley tore open the note. He felt what was in store for him, and kept his iron calm of manner as he read:

"DEAR SIR LUMLEY: Please come over to the consulate as soon as you can; but keep the thing quiet, for it's an affair of honor. Owen's been hurt pretty badly—not dangerous, you know, but very painful and much loss of blood. Keep it from the ladies, and every one else.
Yours,
"RICHARD HAMILTON."

Sir Lumley kept his face inscrutable and asked the clerk, as he folded up the note:

"Where's the consulate?"

But not waiting for the answer, he stalked out, jumped into a hack and drove over to the British Consulate, which every one in Cairo knew.

He asked for Colonel Hamilton, and was met by that gentleman himself, who hurried him to his own private apartments in haste. There Sir Lumley broke down and gasped:

"What is it, Hamilton? Is the boy dead? Tell me the worst."

The consul-general shook his head.

"No, no; not as bad as that. But that Brazilian's a devil with the sword. Poor Owen will lose his right arm. In fact it's just been amputated, to save his life."

Sir Lumley uttered a hollow groan and sunk powerless into a chair.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE EXTRA SHEET.

THE *Bord du Nil* made its bow to the foreign public of Cairo every Saturday morning, with a regularity that testified to Mr. Frankly's talents as a bill collector; for it is a melancholy fact that weekly and daily journals cannot be printed without money to pay printers and paper-makers.

Like many o'her Levantine papers, it was published in two languages, half being in Italian, the other half French, with an occasional extra edition in which English was substituted for one of the other languages.

Most of these polyglot papers are edited by vagabond Italians, who murder the English parts of their journals in a ghastly manner; but the *Bord du Nil* was an honorable exception to the rule.

Frankly had been in Egypt for at least ten years, having drifted there from another ten years in Europe, and had become a very expert linguist in all the Mediterranean tongues, with a large stock of Arabic in the form of slang.

Like most newspaper men of his roving ways, he was a Bohemian writer, who delighted in nothing so much as a "slashing" article, and believed devoutly in the power of the press, muzzled though it be in Egypt.

On the day after that in which Sir Lumley had been stunned by the unexpected disaster happening to his son, the *Bord du Nil* came out with an English extra which was hawked about the streets of Cairo in true Yankee fashion, and sold like wildfire, as Dom Gil had predicted.

Clarence Hart, who had been hunting all over the city to find Dom Gil Grabador, whom he had at last begun to suspect of being the missing Gilbert Carver, heard the boys yelling out their praises of the paper in a dozen different languages, and caught the words:

"*Gran due lo entre el Duque de Diamantina el signor Inglese.*" (Great duel between the Duke of Diamantina and the English gentleman.)

Much surprised, for he had not heard a whisper of any such thing, he bought a paper at once, paying double price in his ignorance of Carriene prices, and saw before him a real newspaper, with an extra sheet, printed in English, with displayed head lines, short paragraphs, and a general "newsy" appearance that did his heart good. It looked like home.

He had not been able to find Dom Gil since they first entered Cairo, for the Brazilian had suddenly disappeared from the house of Diamantina as soon as he had set it in order for his chief, and the duke did not give Clarence any information on the subject.

Therefore Hart, feeling uneasy and anxious, plunged into the paper rather to distract his thoughts than for any other purpose.

His eye was immediately caught by the headlines, arranged in true sensational style:

"THE WAGER OF BATTLE."

DIAMONDS ARE TRUMPS.

Sanguinary Duel Between Foreigners.

Northern Beef Against Southern Nerve.

THE SOUTH WINS!!!!

The account beneath these startling headings was as follows:

Thanks to the unequalled energy of our STAFF, the NILE BANK is to-day the only paper in the world that contains an account of the duel fought behind the great pyramid of Gizeh, while our regular edition was going to press.

"We were there."

"The NILE BANK staff wouldn't miss a duel like that. We're not in that business."

"It was all arranged in a club-house that shall be nameless. The D. of D. and Capt. O. L. of H. B. M. Navy, had a little difference about a lady who shall be nameless, and agreed to carve each other, in gentlemanly style, behind the great pyramid, at six o'clock P. M."

"To accommodate them, we kept back our regular edition for a couple of hours, and we had our reward. Both men were on time."

"The duel was just perfect."

"The appearance of the combatants when they stripped was a great contrast. The English person was a two hundred-pounder, with a good deal of fat about him. He looked solid but slow."

"The D. of D. was what our old friend John C. Heenan would have called a 'daisy.' With fifty pounds less on his bones than John Bull, he was as hard as a nut and as quick as a flash of Jersey lightning."

"No time was lost in preliminaries. We shall not give the names of the seconds, because it might not do them any good with the Khedive, but will only say this: They were there all the time."

"John Bull got to work as soon as the blades crossed, with a well-intended cut at the D.'s head. Unfortunately the gentleman from Brazil was not there when it came, and Mr. Bull had a narrow escape from decapitation in return."

"Then ensued the queerest duel we ever saw. After the first clash the blades never crossed; and John Bull had to stand on the defensive, while the D. of D. was most of the time behind his enemy's back waving his sword in close proximity to the other's head. Any one could see that Bull's life was in his foe's hands whenever he wished to take it."

"At last, furious and disappointed, the Englishman managed to catch the D. with his left hand, and threw back his sword to give a down cut that would have split his skull. In that instant up went the D.'s saber, and cut off his enemy's arm just above the elbow, as clean as if it had been done by a surgeon."

"We had the pleasure of examining the weapon with which this feat was performed, and found that it was just as sharp as the razor of the best barber in Cairo."

"This ended the affair at once. Two surgeons were on hand, and they had the artery tied up in a jiffy, while the D. of D., with a polite bow to his late foe, went off to keep an engagement with a lady."

Thus ended the account in the *Bord du Nil* of what Hart began to think nothing but an ingenious hoax. He had seen the duke on the previous evening, and he certainly did not look like a man who had just been fighting a duel.

Hart had found him at home, just preparing for his evening ride with the princess, and the duke had been as quiet and gracious as usual. To his own inquiry after Dom Gil, Diamantina had answered:

"Ma dear sare, I never keep track of Dom Gil. He comes and goes, and as long as the household goes well I ask no questions. *Au revoir, sare.* I shall not need your services till to-morrow afternoon. Till then, see Cairo. Enjoy yourself."

And that was all.

Dom Gil had not been home all night; none of the servants knew anything about him; and Hart had all day been hunting for him in vain through Cairo.

The article in the *Bord du Nil* interested him so much that he glanced through the rest of the paper to see if there was anything else that concerned him or his friends.

He soon came to the French leader which was repeated in Italian on the opposite page. It was much shorter than the account of the duel, and in a different style. It said:

"We regret to record the withdrawal by consent from the rolls of the Khedive Club of the name of Sir Lumley Lawton, in consequence of the article we copied from last week's London Times. Sir Lumley should have insisted on open charges and showed himself innocent. His retreat shows that he fears an investigation. We are able to say from private information that the watch of the Rajah of Krishnapoor, which Sir Lumley obtained by such peculiar means, is now in Cairo, sported by a lady who seems to be quite proud of the stolen property. Respect for the sex alone restrains us from giving her name, but we would advise Sir Lumley to seek England as soon as may be. Egyptian air is fatal to fly-blown reputations."

Then Hart folded up his paper and fell into a fit of deep musing as he walked homeward.

He was too acute not to have divined from all he had seen the identity of the duke and the princess. O'Shea's stories told him at various times before they ever saw the duke had prepared him for it, and the princess's emotion at sight of Sir Lumley told him the rest. He only wondered at his own infatuation in not sooner recognizing his uncle, Gilbert Carver, in the sham Brazilian Dom Gil Grabador. But what

was the duke's object then in saving Helen Lawton from the Arabs? If he wanted vengeance, he surely could have had it there by leaving her alone to Fyzoul Abdallah's mercy.

Pondering over the mystery, he arrived at the Diamantina mansion, rung the bell, and was admitted by a smart Egyptian watchman in military uniform, who said, in reply to his surprised look:

"Dey all gone, Howadji. Me watchman till dey come back. What name, Howadji?"

"Hart. I'm the duke's secretary. What does all this mean?" asked the young man, bewildered. "I left the house only three hours ago and all was quiet."

The watchman grinned.

"Di'mond great lord, Howadji. He go quick when go. Letter for you, Howadji."

And he handed Clarence a note in the delicate running hand of the duke, which Hart hastily perused. It was in the curt form of an order to himself:

"On receipt of this go to Alexandria, call at Papadoulos, Demetri & Co. They will give you further orders and funds. You are to come to Melapetros."

"DIAMANTINA."

"Melapetros," repeated Hart to himself in a dreamy way: "I never heard of such a place."

But all the same, he took the train to Alexandria that evening.

CHAPTER XXV.

FLITTING.

THE Hon. Lorelia and her niece were yawning in the hotel parlor at Shepherd's after breakfast, which they had been compelled to take alone, Sir Lumley not having made his appearance since he went to the Consulate the evening before.

"Oh, dear me, Helen," cried aunt Lorelia, ruefully. "How ever shall we get through another hot day like yesterday in this horrible place? What a change from that dear duke! Lumley ought to be ashamed of himself, leaving us like this all day. If we only had an escort I'd not mind, but there isn't so much as a boy visible. What shall we do?"

"Why not take a carriage and drive out to the pyramids, aunt? We can take one belonging to the hotel and be all safe."

"But it wouldn't be quite the correct thing, Helen, to go alone. We might be robbed or murdered by some of those Arabs."

Helen smiled.

"Oh, no, aunt. Mr. Hart told me there was nothing to fear in Egypt; the Arabs are in as good control as the people of London."

"I wish we could find Captain O'Shea, or even Mr. Hart," observed the elder lady, musingly. "It's a dreadful change to be left alone like this. I believe we'll ask the proprietor what's best to do."

She rung the bell in the sublime faith of a British female in the integrity of hotel-keepers, and soon had that functionary before her, questioning him about Sir Lumley and a dozen different things.

She noticed, or rather Helen did for her, that the landlord was very ready to answer, and that he eyed her with a certain protecting familiarity that was foreign to his usual ways.

"He would advise the ladies not to worry about Sir Lumley. There were a number of formalities that foreign residents 'ad to pass through, and no doubt Sir Lumley was busy at the Consulate 'aving 'em done. I'd advise the ladies not to go to the pyramids now. It's too 'ot for pleasure. Better take the 'otel *cavass* and a couple of donkeys and go to the *lagers*. They're nice and shady. You won't suffer from the 'eat there, ladies."

Lorelia, imagining the *cavass* to be some sort of a carriage, answered resignedly:

"Very well, then. Get the *cavass* ready and we'll go. We'll be back for dinner."

As she spoke, she drew out that fatal watch, the innocent cause of so much trouble, and consulted it with her usual languidly affected indifference.

The landlord looked at it, bowing and rubbing his hands.

"Beg pardon, my lady, I'm sure, but that's a monstrously pretty watch of yours. Can't 'elp noticing it, you know. Beg pardon, my lady."

This tickled Lorelia mightily, and she opened it very slowly for consultation, so that the landlord might have a good look. Flattery was sweet to her, no matter from whose lips.

Then the landlord backed out, and as soon as he was down-stairs observed to the room clerk:

"That 'ere paper's right, Dobbs. She's got the watch, sure as a gun. I never saw sich a sparkler in all my days."

Meantime aunt and niece attired themselves in their coolest Indian dresses and hats, and waited in patience for the waiter to tell them the *cavass* was ready.

Presently a tap came at the door, and Lorelia cried: "Come in."

A huge, piratical-looking man, with a black beard that covered his broad chest; with shoulders like Atlas and the muscles of a Hercules; stood at the door, dressed in ruby velvet and gold lace, with a yellow silk sash round his

waist that positively bristled with knives, pistols, yataghans and other murderous-looking implements. In his hand this formidable-looking person carried a great black whip two inches thick at the butt, and this whip he held up to his forehead in a sort of military salute.

Lorelia shrieked and Helen started back in affright.

The pirate at the door smiled in a manner unexpectedly gentle, and said in a deep bass voice:

"Donkeys ready, ladies."

Then aunt Lorelia in trembling tones ventured to falter out:

"Who—who are you?"

"I, my lady? I'm Nicolo, the hotel *cawass*. Every one in Cairo know me."

His accent was of the slightest, and the ladies began to perceive they had mistaken a peaceable porter and messenger for a pirate.

"And are you to take us to the bazar?" asked Lorelia, more boldly.

"Wherever my lady chooses to go. Pyramids if she likes."

But aunt Lorelia did not want to go to the pyramids. She preferred the bazars and felt perfectly safe now. This piratical *cawass* was as handsome as a picture in his fine imposing style and Lorelia secretly wished, as he lifted her bodily like a baby to put her on her donkey, that she could have such a splendid fellow to show off in London.

"What a sensation he'd make behind a carriage in the Park, Helen," she whispered, as Nicolo stepped out beside their donkeys on the way to the bazar.

Never had Lorelia enjoyed herself so much as she did that day under the guidance of Nicolo in the bazars. That wonderful *cawass* knew every one and everything in the bazar, superintended her purchases that she might not be cheated (getting twenty-five per cent. commission on profit from the various shopkeepers for his little services) and telling her everything she wanted to know.

When at last they left those seducing precincts the Hon. virgin's purse was much lighter than when it went in, and Helen was completely satiated with color and picturesqueness.

Nicolo the *cawass* had done that day a service he did not quite understand, but which was none the less a valuable one to Sir Lumley Lawton. He had kept the ladies in the native part of the town and out of all hearing of the newsboys crying the *Bord du Nil*, and it was with perfect tranquillity that they went down to dinner that evening, where they found Sir Lumley already deep in his soup and apparently as tranquil as if he had but just parted from them.

"Well, Lumley, I must say you are a valuable escort," remarked his sister, in her iciest tones. "Here you have left us all alone since yesterday morning. Do you suppose we can go out alone?"

"Seems you have," returned Sir Lumley, gruffly. "Nicolo can do the honors here better than I can. Have you seen enough of Cairo?"

"Why, papa, we've only just begun to see it!" cried Helen, animatedly. "Those bazars are just too awfully lovely for anything."

Poor Helen was not proof against the seductions of slang.

"Well," replied her father, in a hard, constrained sort of voice, "to-day will have to satisfy you. We start for Alexandria by the six o'clock train to-morrow morning, and you'll have to do your packing to-night, girls; that's all."

There was an immediate duet of protests and entreaties, but the baronet was firm as a rock. He knew so much of which they were blissfully ignorant that Cairo had become a place of torture to him in which blow after blow came driving at his unprotected head.

Owen's severe wound, his utter incapacity to stem the current of newspaper clamor by stopping the *Bord du Nil* or cutting off the ears of Frankly, as he had boasted he would do, put a different face on the whole business. The journal sold through the streets as only spicy social scandals can sell and there was no one to stop the yelling of the newsboys.

Colonel Hamilton was powerless, now. In the goodness of his heart he had violated the law for his friend's sake, and had already received a private hint, coming from the Khedive, that no notice would be taken of the matter unless there was any further trouble, in which case the Viceroy would be obliged to stop the *Bord du Nil*, and at the same time to write to the British Government requesting Hamilton's dismissal.

Thus, as we have said, the Lawtons were powerless, father and son, and had to sit still in a darkened room, while all Cairo wagged its tongues about them.

Poor Owen was reduced to the weakness of a child, he who had been so strong and domineering, and he lay on his back looking gloomily at the wall and thinking, with vain regret, of the lost arm he would never see again.

"If it had gone in battle, I could have stood it; but to lose it in a duel, and just now when those other hounds are opening cry on you, sir; I find it pretty hard lines, I tell you."

Sir Lumley had no consolation to offer, and tried none, as Owen went on:

"And that's not the worst of it. There's the Snapper waiting at Suez, and I absent from her. They'll court-martial me for this as soon as I get home. Curse that Diamantina! I wish I'd never seen his face."

And Owen groaned impatiently.

"I wish we none of us had, Owen," assented his father. "But, how did he manage to do it, my dear boy?"

"I don't know, sir. I never saw such a fellow in my life. He wouldn't cross swords like a man and fight it out, but he had some infernal monkey-tricks of dodging a blow, and then coming inside your guard, flourishing his blade close to your face, I never saw in any one. I could have cut him fifty times, for he never guarded; but I was afraid of taking a return blow at the same time, and the swords were just like razors. Then at last I grabbed him, and in the same moment he cut off my left arm as if it had been a carrot."

Again Owen groaned impatiently, and turned to the wall.

"Confound this stump. It feels as hot as fire. Won't some one dress it for me, or am I to lie here and die all alone?"

Sir Lumley called for the nurse, an old soldier from the military hospital, who managed to make the patient more comfortable in a short space of time, and then it was determined that they should all leave Alexandria as soon as the doctor said Owen could be moved, so as to get back to the Snapper before any trouble arose.

The doctor pronounced that after the second day the patient could go a short journey by rail, as the wound-fever would be over and suppuration have set in toward recovery.

Accordingly, prompt to the appointed hour, and before fashionable modern Cairo had quitted its bed, the Lawtons were steaming toward Alexandria at twenty miles an hour, the captain in a separate car, attended by the old soldier-nurse, his father and female relatives in another car, the women even ignorant of his vicinity, much more of his danger.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A GREEK COMMISSION HOUSE.

THE Greek house of Papadoulos, Demetri & Co., dealers in figs, Latakia tobacco, dates, olives, rice, cotton, rhinoceros horns, elephant tusks, hides, antelope horns, hippopotamus teeth, gold-dust, calicoes, hardware, teas and coffees, candles and molasses, was one of the most respectable firms in Alexandria.

Clarence Hart, landing at the station, asked for this house, and was rattled away to the handsome quay by the Old Port, where, within sight of the floating dock, Ras-el-Teen lighthouse, and a forest of shipping, stretched the dingy yellow warehouses of "Papadoulos, Demetri & Co.," as several hundred feet of black paint informed you.

Papadoulos, Demetri & Co. seemed to be doing a flourishing business, from the tremendous row that was going on round about them.

Their warehouses occupied a large and long block of buildings, and hundreds of porters were staggering about, or wheeling trucks with boxes, barrels, and bales of all shapes and dimensions, in and out of the black, cavernous archways of the lower story.

Carts are not used to any great extent in Alexandria for the transport of merchandise, and therefore there was an absence of the usual and deafening thunder and rattle that attends a great commercial house; but the porters made up for it by all sorts of cries, as they staggered in and out of the building under loads that would have killed any horse.

The hackman pulled up outside of this Babel of voices and hustling porters, and Clarence Hart got out and entered the huge warehouses.

There was no one to direct him; not a single porter seemed to care whether he ran against him or not; and he had to wander about in the midst of piles of merchandise of all varieties of smell, from the pleasant fragrance of figs and raisins to the decidedly objectionable odors of raw hides, badly cured, till he spied, off in one corner of the warehouse, a little boarded-up shed with a window, which he naturally took for some sort of an office.

Tapping at this window, it was opened by a little weazen-faced, black-eyed old Greek in a velvet cap, who popped out his head and squeaked out something in Romaic, of which Hart was blissfully ignorant.

"I want to see Mr. Papadoulos or any one of the firm"—began Clarence, in English, when the old Greek jattered away faster than ever, holding up a card and gesticulating violently.

Clarence produced one of his own cards which he had procured in Cairo, and the sight seemed to mollify the old Greek, for he smiled approval, stuck the card in a little box beside him in the wall, and Hart saw it go up the ordinary shoot used in most newspaper offices.

In a few minutes came a whistle down a speaking-tube, and the old Greek set his ear to the orifice and presently turned to Hart, saying in labored English:

"You-a—please-a—come a."

He bowed and smiled with the utmost politeness

now; came out of his hole, revealing himself as a slender, bowed old man, in a red velvet jacket, white silk petticoat, and red velvet leggings; a yellow sash round his waist completing an attire about as unlike sober, serious business as anything ever conceived of or read about.

He opened a door in the dingy wall, led the way up a dark, winding and dusty staircase, into a second story of vast silent warerooms, full of merchandise, piled up to the open roof, fifty feet above them.

Threading their way through a devious path among walls of bales, they came to another staircase, which climbed up to the open roof, and Clarence asked, in amazement:

"Is the office up there?"

The old Greek laughed.

"You-a—vill-a—see-a," he answered, slowly, and with evident difficulty in giving his Greek thought English words.

Then they went up the staircase as far as the tie-beams of the roof, when they came on a light gallery which took them out to the side of the house; and Clarence saw that they were entering a large square tower, which overlooked the whole port, and was itself a deliciously cool retreat on that hot day.

Here at last he found the private office of the great firm, and into a cool room, with a polished tile floor, a circular divan and a few stools and low tables, he was introduced by the old Greek, who said, indicating a gentleman inside:

"Papadoulos."

Clarence entered, a little at a loss what language to use, but he was set at ease by Mr. Papadoulos, who proved to be a fine gray-bearded old man in the picturesque Greek dress, who came to meet him, saying:

"Mr. Hart, I have expect you to-day, sare. I's all be glad to see you now. You 'ave just arrive?"

"Yes, sir, by direction of—"

"Yes, yes, I know. *M. le Duc de Diamantina*. You are his *secretaire*, his good friend. Were you ever at Melapetros, Monsieur Hart?"

"No, sir, never heard of the place till now, I assure you."

Mr. Papadoulos laughed.

"You s'all see a beautiful place, de residence of *Madame la Princesse*. You s'all have passage on de barque *Euphrosyne*. She sail to-morrow. Do you know my partners, sare?"

"No, sir."

"Well, well, you shall. Mr. Demetri, he is now at Marseilles directing our agency there, but here comes our junior partner, Mr. Glypteros. He has been in America many years. Let me introduce you: Mr. Hart from America, Mr. Glypteros."

Clarence bowed before a tall thin man in glossy black clothes, whose solemn, clean-shaven face looked as if it had just moved out of a portrait of William M. Evarts, and would be in its best place behind the reading-desk of a country Methodist parish in Connecticut.

"Very happy to make your acquaintance," said Mr. Glypteros in a regular Yankee tone of voice. "It does me good to see a Borsting face once more."

CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. GLYPTEROS.

CLARENCE HART looked with some astonishment at the long thin man who talked English with a down-East twang, and who was introduced to him as a Greek gentleman, Mr. Glypteros.

"Is it true that you have been in America, Mr. Glypteros?" he asked, with curiosity.

"Waal, yes, I used to live there once," drawled Mr. Glypteros; "and I hain't forgotten how to talk yet, I guess."

"I should think not," remarked Hart, pointedly. "I should have taken you for an American anywhere. You could never disguise that accent."

Mr. Glypteros smiled, till his face looked like a parchment on which water had been spilt till it shriveled up in creases.

"Don't ye be too sure of that," he observed. "I've seen the time when my own blood relations couldn't tell who I was, from my voice."

"Oh, I suppose you mean your Greek friends," assented Hart. "That's quite likely. I never should have taken you for a Greek, myself, you know. But you could never hide the Yankee accent if you spoke English."

"Guess not," remarked Glypteros, with a wink at Mr. Papadoulos. "The Americans are a darned sight smarter than the Greeks; ain't they, Papadoulos?"

Clarence could not understand what the joke was between the two, but from some cause or other the old merchant began to laugh in a soft, polite way, and Mr. Glypteros sniggered audibly, while the head of the house extracted his snuff-box from the red sash he wore and offered it to Hart, saying:

"Will you not take a pinch sare? I use it for my eyesight. I am told it clears the sight wonderfully."

And then all three laughed again, Hart not understanding the joke, but taking it good-naturedly, if, as he began to surmise, it was partially at his own expense.

Then the American was struck by a sudden thought, and asked:

"Have you known the Duke of Diamantina very long, gentlemen?"

Mr. Papadoulos smiled and looked reflectively at his snuff-box.

"Yes, sare. We've know de duke since he was born, I may say. His family have always been the patrons of our house."

"Indeed?" asked Hart, eagerly. "Did his father have dealings with you also? Did you know the Rajah?"

Mr. Papadoulos instantly changed his whole manner. From a polite, gentle old man he became a sort of statue of ice, saying, as he turned away, in the driest of voices:

"I will get you your orders from the duke, sare. De asking of questions is not among them."

He sat down at his desk and began to sort among some papers, while Clarence turned crimson at his rebuff, stammering to Mr. Glypteros, who regarded him with equal coldness:

"I beg your pardon, but I thought that among friends—"

"I guess you're a pretty young man," remarked Mr. Glypteros, quietly, "and a little advice won't harm you, Mr. Hart. When you're eatin' a man's bread 'tain't the right thing to ask questions about his private affairs. I'll tell ye this much. The duke is the richest man in these parts and holds a controlling share in this house. Any one that wants to git along with him had better attend to his business and keep a still tongue. Anything else you want to ask?"

"If you please, yes," returned Clarence, considerably crestfallen. "I have reason to believe that Dom Gil Grabador, the duke's steward and agent, is none other than an uncle of mine. You have been in America, sir, and probably know him. Do you know whether his real name is Gilbert Carver or not?"

Mr. Glypteros looked milder.

"Do I know Dom Gil? Waal, yes, I ought to. Is his name Carver? Waal, Grabador's Spanish for Carver, that's certain."

"And where is Dom Gil now?" asked Clarence, anxiously.

Mr. Glypteros laughed again.

"Dom Gil's a mighty uncertain man to locate. He might be anywhere from this room to Gibraltar by this time."

"Then, sir, please tell me, did you ever know one Gilbert Carver in America?"

"Gil Carver? Waal, rather. He was a good-for-nothing, shiftless lunatic when he left Boston, he was."

"And do you know what became of him, sir? You don't know how anxious I am to find out. My poor mother has never ceased to pray for him ever since he left home."

"Humph!" grunted Glypteros, and he turned away to look out to sea. "She might be better employed than praying for such a loafer as Gil."

Clarence colored high, and laid his hand on the other's shoulder.

"Look here, Mr. Glypteros," he said, sharply; "you rebuked me justly for impertinent questions just now, but please to remember that my mother's brother is not to be called a loafer to my face. I expect an apology, sir."

Something or other seemed to tickle Mr. Glypteros mightily, for he laughed in a peculiar silent manner as he answered:

"Geerewusalem! Do you mean you'd call me out if I didn't?"

"I certainly should, sir," cried Hart, impatiently. "I don't wish to make a disturbance before Mr. Papadoulos, but I'll not hear my poor uncle called a loafer by any man. It's a falsehood, sir."

Mr. Papadoulos, who had been busy at the table over his papers, here put in a word.

"Gentlee, gentlee, sare. Monsieur Glypteros and I are old men and must have our say."

"Old or young, no man shall call my uncle a loafer before me," retorted Clarence, firmly. "This gentleman shall apologize or else—"

Papadoulos rose

"Gentlee, sare. Pardon. What is de trouble? Monsieur Glypteros 'ave insult you? Impossible!"

"He called my uncle a loafer."

"A loafer?—vat is dat?"

"It means an idle, good-for-nothing vagabond."

"Loafer? Dat is Americano, I suppose. Monsieur Glypteros, I am surprise you should insult dis gentleman, friend of the Duke of Diamantina. Dis gentleman, you call him loafer?"

"No, no," said Clarence, beginning to feel a little ashamed of his heroics. "Not me; it was my uncle."

"Your uncle, sare? Vat uncle?"

"One whom I suspect to be the same with Dom Gil Grabador," retorted the American, impatient at the questions. "Gilbert Carver. He said he was a loafer; and by heavens he shall apologize or fight for it."

Here Mr. Glypteros, who had been silent while Papadoulos took up the parable, broke in with his usual drawl:

"Waal, in that case, it's so much easier to lie than to fight that I take it all back, cunnel. Gil

Carver's a real gentleman. Is that enough? Shake hands on it."

Hart could not refuse, and held out his hand a little reluctantly, when Mr. Glypteros seized it and gave it a pressure under which the bones cracked, while Clarence felt the most acute pain, which he could not show for very shame after his late threats.

Mr. Glypteros continued to shake his hand with the gripe of a giant, repeating:

"Gil Carver's a gentleman, by Hokey, and he's got a gentleman for a nephew. Stick a pin in that. And you was goin' to fight me about Gil! Waal, waal, if that warn't real spunky. Why, sonny, you wouldn't be only a babby in my hands, but all the same, I glory in your spunk. I do, by Jiminy!"

When he dropped Hart's hand at last the young man felt that Mr. Glypteros had not boasted idly. He felt for a moment as helpless as if he had been really a baby, his hand utterly unable to perform its office till he had smoothed it out and allowed it to rest.

Mr. Papadoulos, affecting to notice nothing of his embarrassment, now called him to the table and began to read him a list of instructions from the papers before him.

"You are to sail to Cyprus in the barque Euphrosyne, which sails to-morrow. She carries a cargo to Larnaca. There you will meet the duke's yacht in all likelihood. If she be not there you will cross the island and take ship at the port of Nikosia, where you will find the duke's tender, El Djemel, which will carry you to Melapetros. You are to try while on the way to learn as much of the Romaine as you can, for the duke wishes his secretary to be accomplished. Dat is all, sare, except de funds. I am direck to pay you one thousand Liras Turk on account for salary and expense. Here is de sum in de queenie Ingles."

And old Papadoulos handed him a little roll of gold-pieces which represented to Clarence a whole year's salary on the scale of U. S. navy pay.

"Now, monsieur," continued the old merchant, "I've only to wish you a good voyage and invite you to come to dinner at my house this evening. You will lodge of course at de Mehmet Ali Hotel. I will send my carriage for you. *Au revoir.*"

And he bowed Clarence out of the office, Mr. Glypteros giving him a cool nod as he went.

CHAPTER XXVIII

INVALIDS.

THAT afternoon was spent by the American in strolling about Alexandria, seeing whatever was to be seen and much interested in the motley crowd which hurries to and fro in this city of the border land between East and West.

He had arrived, himself, by the night train from Cairo, and had been wandering aimlessly about the city till near noon, when the distant shriek of the locomotive warned him that another train was coming in at the station, and he determined to go and see the passengers get out, with the longing to find a familiar face which comes over one in a strange city.

When he reached the station the great herd of passengers had mostly dispersed, and only a few of the later birds were still coming slowly out.

Among these he noticed a group who seemed to be supporting an invalid, a tall man, who walked very slowly along, resting his only arm round the neck of a stout fellow in the Egyptian uniform, while the other sleeve of his coat was looped up empty on his breast.

All of Hart's professional sympathy was aroused at the sight, for he judged that the arm had been but recently amputated from the paucity of the sufferer.

He made his way toward the injured man and soon recognized Helen Lawton's brother, his face unshorn and haggard, all his old haughty strut gone, a general air of gloom and languor possessing him.

While he hesitated whether to offer his services or not (for Owen looked as if he needed some help) he saw Sir Lumley come hurrying back through the crowd, and heard him say:

"There, Owen, I've put the girls in the carriage for the hotel. They've not seen you yet. Now I'll help you."

"I'm afraid I'm going to faint, sir," here remarked Owen, in a very low voice, and Hart hesitated no more.

He had an old physician's habit of carrying restoratives with him, and he hastily ran to Owen, saying in a tone of authority:

"Let me come to him, Sir Lumley. I'm a doctor."

The poor father turned round with tears in his eyes, and without recognizing him, for he had only seen him once in a dark room.

"Thank you, sir, thank you. He's not fit to be moved, but we had to come."

Then Hart hastily poured out a little brandy which he made the wounded man drink and helped him into a carriage which took them to the hotel.

All the time they were riding Owen Lawton lay back with his eyes closed, and Clarence

saw that he had not recognized him. The difference of dress (for he had worn the yacht's uniform when last they met and now he was all in regular Frankish white) served as a disguise; and even when he gave his name neither gentleman seemed to associate it with the Duke of Diamantina, for the baronet began to tell him the story of the duel with much bitterness against the Brazilian.

Owen was too weak to say much, but once he put up his hand and whispered:

"Hush, sir; it was all fair. We must keep the secret."

Hart could not help a certain feeling of admiration for this young man who bore his misfortune so bravely, and when they reached the hotel he insisted on seeing to his comfort, dressing the arm himself, and finding that the careless soldier-nurse had caused his patient much discomfort by an open place into which the dust had got.

As soon as the poor captain was made comfortable Clarence left the room and hastened to his own to dress for Mr. Papadoulos's dinner according to engagement, and as soon as he had donned his regulation suit of torture (in that climate) went out on the broad piazza of the hotel to watch the bay and enjoy the sea breeze.

He found a good many people there like himself, and almost the first he stumbled on were Sir Lumley Lawton, the Hon. Lorelia and Helen, enjoying the same cool view.

"Why, Mr. Hart, where have you been, and how is that dear, dear duke, and our darling princess?" asked the Hon. Lorelia, with her usual kittenish impulsiveness.

Helen gave a nervous start as she saw him and turned scarlet for an instant, then as pale as death, while she looked steadily out into the bay, biting the top of her fan in a manner indicating some embarrassment.

As for Sir Lumley he was so much surprised that he ejaculated:

"Why, bless me, Lorelia, do you know the doctor?"

"The doctor? Well, yes, I believe he is a doctor, but to me he's always Mr. Hart, who saved Helen and me from the clutches of the angry ocean when the Benares went down."

"What, what?"

Sir Lumley began to stammer, while Hart replied in his calmest tones:

"The ladies think too much of a trifle, Sir Lumley. My Boyton suit saved us all from drowning, but it was no use against the Arabs. For that we must all thank the Duke of Diamantina and his guns."

"And how is that dear duke?" again asked Lorelia, while Sir Lumley sat drumming on the arm of his chair and Helen looked out to sea as steadily as before.

"I could not say, madam. The duke left Cairo yesterday and I may not see him for months."

"What! have you left him?" suddenly asked Helen's voice, in a way that showed she was not by any means an indifferent listener.

"No, Miss Lawton, I sail to join him at Melapetros to-morrow."

"And where's Melapetros?" asked she, in the same abrupt way.

"To tell the truth, I don't know," the American answered, with a smile. "I am in the hands of others who will take me there. I suppose it's somewhere in Greece."

"Ah, then we shall see him again," cried Lorelia, delightedly. "We're going home by way of Athens you know and surely the duke will be at Athens."

"Well, Miss Lawton, I see a carriage coming for me, and as I have an engagement to dine I will say *au revoir.*"

And Clarence backed out into the passage and was going down-stairs, when he felt Sir Lumley's hand, and lo! the baronet had followed him quietly, and now whispered:

"I've told my daughter, but my sister must not know of Owen's wound. Will you keep the secret?"

"Certainly, Sir Lumley."

"You are connected with the Duke of Diamantina, sir?"

"I am his secretary, sir."

"You know who he is, sir?"

"I know that he is a gentleman of noble character, Sir Lumley."

The baronet scowled at him.

"Curse his noble character! He has maimed my son for life, and I'll get even with him for it. Tell him that when you see him."

Clarence stared at his companion in haughty surprise.

"I'll give him the warning, if not the message, Sir Lumley. Good-day."

The baronet looked down the stairs after him and ground his teeth.

"Curse him!" he muttered. "They all like him and are all against me. How shall I kill him?"

He remained brooding over the means of clearing Diamantina from his path till it was time to go back to the piazza, where he surprised his sister by his gloom so much that she pronounced him a "grumpy old bear."

He could not see his way clear.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FATAL CURIOSITY.

A TELEGRAM had been dispatched from Alexandria ordering the Snapper to come there and receive her captain as soon as she got through the canal, and Owen Lawton began to feel easier in his mind, now that the prospect of professional disgrace was averted.

It was agreed that inasmuch as it would be impossible to keep the matter forever from Lorelia, she was to be told a story about a bursting gun and the amputation of her nephew's arm; for somehow Sir Lumley still shrunk from letting any one know the true secret of the Duke of Diamantina's enmity toward his family. He was doomed to keep a smiling face toward that person before the world, knowing in his heart that his secret was no secret to at least two people besides Diamantina and the princess; namely, O'Shea and the American.

He had not seen O'Shea after their short meeting in Cairo, but the very next day after Sir Lumley's arrival in Alexandria, he came across the jolly Captain of Control, parading the docks in a bustling and absorbed fashion.

He could not avoid noticing him, for it was his torture to be compelled to give outward civility to those he knew to be his secret foes. Something impelled him now to go up to O'Shea in the midst of the street, and hold out his hand, saying:

"O'Shea, have you forgotten that we are at least countrymen?"

The honest Irishman looked a little confused, for the question hit him in a weak place.

"I hope not, Sir Lumley," he answered, trying to be stiff.

"And yet you're joining my enemies to blacken my character," said the baronet, bitterly. "You were a sergeant when I first saw you, in a corps where no man ever yet rose from the ranks; and I got you a commission and helped you along. You're no cause to turn against me, O'Shea, at least."

The captain was so much taken aback that he could not answer a word, and Sir Lumley continued:

"Are you hunting up something else to put in the papers about me?"

"No, by the powers, no, Sir Lumley. I'm only looking for a vessel to go to Cyprus in. I've orders from the department to go there and make a report on the best station for troops."

Sir Lumley was unaffectedly surprised.

"For troops! What troops? We don't own Cyprus."

"Sure, don't ye know Lord Beaconsfield's made a treaty with the Porte, and that seven thousand troops are coming from India to Malta?" asked O'Shea.

Then Sir Lumley remembered how he had heard of this curious stroke of the Israelite premier's policy.

"Yes, but what of Cyprus?" he asked.

"As soon as they get through in Malta, and the Roosians come near to Constantinople, our blacks go to Cyprus. Mum's the word, Sir Lumley. I'm waiting for a Yankee skipper to take me there, now. Ah, here he comes, bedad."

Sir Lumley saw approaching them a tall, thin, yellow personage, in a shambling nautical suit of blue serge, and asked:

"Who is this Yankee, and where is he going?"

"His name's Carver, and he commands a ship going on a roving trip in the Aegean, ending at Athens."

"Then, by Jove, he's my man," said Sir Lumley to himself, as he watched the tall Yankee chaffering with O'Shea, and wondered to himself where he had seen his face.

The captain's business was soon settled, and he turned to Sir Lumley.

"It's all right, Sir Lumley. We sail to-night. Bedad, I wish Miss Helen was goin' along. It'll be a pleasant trip for her, if she does."

"Perhaps we may," assented the baronet.

"Have you any more room in your cabin, Mr.—ah—I haven't the pleasure."

"Carver, sir, Captaining Carver air my handle," answered the sailor, with a strong nasal accent. "Room in the cabin?—How many air there?"

"Three of us—two ladies."

"Then I'm jest the critter kin do it, cunnell," was the eager reply. "Do you want to go to Athens, quietly?"

"Yes."

Sir Lumley gave a slight shudder. He wanted to lose himself for a little while, till that horrible newspaper story died out. He couldn't bear to think of going on a P. & O. steamer, now, where every one knew him, and would be pestering him with all sorts of questions.

Captain Carver clapped him on the shoulder in a familiar way.

"Say no more; the cabin air yourn, if you like to pay the price, a hundred dollars a head. We'll be some time on the v'yage, cunnell, but ye don't keer for that, I s'pose?"

"No, no."

"And ye'll be as quiet as the grave, all the time? Kin ye talk Greek, cunnell?"

"I used to read it at school," answered the baronet, shortly.

"Waal, ye'll hev a chance to brush it up along of these sailors, who speaks it naterally. What name might I call you by, cunnell?"

"Lumley," answered the baronet, his face flushing; "Colonel Lumley."

"Waal, Colonel Lumley, you jest step into the bank with me, and pay your passagemoney, and I'll send up the boys for your traps, to onst. Where do you hang out?"

Sir Lumley told him, and went with him to the bank, where he paid out, with great satisfaction, his passage money, after which he departed with O'Shea to the hotel, where he found Lieutenant Sloman, who had come, full of sympathy for his unlucky commander, with a party of sailors to take him back to the Snapper, which was already in the offing, waiting.

The parting between father and son and the rest of the family was painful and affecting. Even aunt Lorelia forgot her selfishness so far as to pity and condole with poor Owen, as the sailors took him off on a litter to the port; and Helen wept bitterly, perhaps the more so because Clarence Hart, who had been so kind to her brother the day before, had entirely disappeared, no one knew whither.

He had kept the duke's counsel so well that they did not even know in whose hands he had put himself, save that he was going to some place called Melapetros.

After Owen's departure, Helen was quite willing to pack up and depart herself; and neither of the ladies had any objection to Sir Lumley's plan of a quiet sail among the Greeks of the Aegean. There was something mysterious in the air, Helen could not tell what, that gave her a vague feeling of uneasiness while they stayed in Egypt.

She was quiet and observant, and had noticed that the people at the *table d'hôte* stared at them every time her eyes were away, and then looked guilty and ashamed of themselves when detected.

She had noticed that her father kept a strict watch over all the newspapers, and that she had not seen one since she had been in Cairo.

Like a true woman, she was not to be mystified for long in vain; and, waiting till she found her chance, she rung the bell of the hotel parlor when her aunt and father were both away, and feed the waiter handsomely to bring her the Cairo papers for the last three days.

The boy, a smart Maltese, not caring to disoblige a lady who paid so handsomely, brought her a small pile of Alexandria and Cairene papers, on the top of which, in conspicuous capitals, she saw the *Bord du Nil* extra, with the account of the duel, a light and frivolous jest, as she thought it, on the maiming and almost death of her only brother.

Pale with indignation, she read it through, and then turned to the French part, where she came on that leader which had driven Sir Lumley out of Cairo. As she slowly read it, half-aloud, her face grew paler and paler, and then she rose up and threw down the paper on the floor, trampling on it and muttering with white lips:

"Oh, the cowards! To stab a gentleman in his sorrow like that!"

But there was something fascinating in that horrible journal after all. She took it up again and found it referred to a former article; and lo! there was the *Times* clipping in the very next number, which told her the true nature of the accusation against her father.

With a choking sob the poor girl clutched the two papers up and hurried away to the silence of her own apartment, where she wept bitter tears of shame and anger at her sudden degradation.

Now she understood the gloom of her father since they were at Shepherd's; his sudden flight from Cairo, and their present trip to sea.

"Oh, Father of Mercy!" sobbed Helen, "can it be true? My father a—"

She could not say what she meant.

The crime of which he was accused was one not known to the law, that does injustice between Frank and Hindoo; but it was one so mean and base, so degrading to all pretensions of gentlemanly character, that she groaned in very bitterness of anguish as she thought of it.

A traitor who betrayed a noble prince to death; a thief who robbed a corpse; a hypocrite who had allowed his own sister to become the byword of all Cairo for wearing the watch he had stolen and lied about!

"Oh, it can't! it can't! It shall not be true!" groaned poor Helen to herself; and then she heard the quick imperative knock of her father at her door.

"Nelly, my child, quick, are you ready? The porters are here for the baggage."

She opened the door and came out with the papers in her hands.

"Is that true?" was all she said, her blue eyes gleaming out of a wan white face at him.

Sir Lumley staggered back.

"My God!" he cried. "How did you get those papers?"

"Is it true?" she repeated; and then, as he paused in silence, she said, in a strange, hard voice: "It is. I see it in your face. God help us all!"

CHAPTER XXX.

AMONG THE SPONGE-FISHERS.

THERE is no part of the world perhaps where the combination of natural beauty and romantic association is so striking as in a cruise among the islands of the Greek Archipelago. When the voyage is taken in a vessel manned by Greek sailors, the perfection of lazy enjoyment is reached, for the modern Greeks are as full of wild legends as their fathers of old, and flit from coast to coast in the same childlike fashion, with implicit faith in the existence of giants and cannibals on every shore that is unknown to them.

The Lawton family, after their late experience in Egypt, found the repose on board the good ship *Aphrodite* very pleasant.

To Helen especially, whose pride had been sorely lacerated, it was a blessed relief. Aunt Lorelia found it a bore; but aunt Lorelia did not know all, as her niece did.

To Sir Lumley it seemed as if he had escaped from the bad consequences of his former life, and he was content to loiter on, every day taking him further away from the humiliating memories of public scorn at Cairo.

Here on the seas they were unknown, save as the "Lumley family," and the Yankee skipper, with his Greek crew, treated them with perfect respect, asking no questions; while Captain O'Shea was unusually courteous, even for him.

Thus they loitered about the coast of Cyprus, moving from port to port on all sorts of errands, the skipper seeming to have made a sort of general express agency of his ship, delivering his cargo in small parcels, till at last they squared away from Cyprus for Crete, and ran down into the midst of a sponge-fishery.

Here, Helen expressing a wish to see the proceedings of the divers, the skipper told them they could take the ship's shore-boat with a pair of oars when they liked. Captain O'Shea proposing that he and Sir Lumley should row, so as to get rid of the Greek sailors, who could not understand a word of English, the little party of four left the *Aphrodite*, which at once squared her main-yard and stood off from the coast.

At first they hardly noticed this, thinking she would come back in a short time; but as the distance between them grew greater and greater, and no symptoms of return became visible, aunt Lorelia began to be frightened.

"My good gracious, Lumley!" she cried, "those pirates—I'm sure they must be pirates—are leaving us. We shall all be murdered."

"Oh, nonsense, Lora," answered Sir Lumley, though himself a little uneasy; "they only want to give us a chance to enjoy ourselves among the sponge-fishers. Look at that fellow just going to dive. Isn't he a model for a sculptor? Come, O'Shea, pull on."

And into the midst of the sponge-divers they rowed, where they were received with a shower of polite greetings in Greek, of which they only understood "*Kaliméra*" ("Good-day").

They were so much interested in watching the divers that they forgot all about the ship till they heard the creaking of blocks and spars near by, and, looking up, saw a large, brown-sailed felucca gliding in among the sponge-fishers, and heading straight for their own craft.

Imagining that she had come to collect loads from the other boats they paid no attention to her beyond noticing the picturesqueness of her appearance, till they were surprised and alarmed to find her bumping up against them as if she meant to run them down.

The next moment, a big, black-mustached fellow, with a red jacket, blue leggings, white kilt, sash full of pistols, and a general desperado look about him, caught up the painter of their boat with a boat-hook, coolly pulled the rope on board and hauled it taut ere they could recover from their first surprise.

"What the devil are you doing there?" shouted Sir Lumley, as soon as he could recover his senses. "Let go that painter, you Greek ruffian, you!"

The only reply of the Greek was:

"*Kaliméra, keerie*," (Good-day, sir,) delivered in a mocking-kind of manner, as he secured the end of the painter to a belaying-pin; and then the felucca glided away through the midst of the sponge-fishers, who laughed and jabbered Greek to each other, as if the whole thing were a good joke, as the foreigners were towed away.

Sir Lumley's first anger had given way to a sensation of uneasiness; Lorelia was screaming, Helen pale with fear; while Captain O'Shea was fumbling in vain in the pockets of his coat, lying on the seat, for a pistol, which he remembered too late he had left behind him.

And in the meantime the felucca swept on, towing the boat through the water, bumping against her, an unresisting captive, till they had cleared the sponge-divers and were standing out to sea.

"What do you suppose they want, O'Shea?" asked Sir Lumley, now thoroughly alarmed.

"Divil a one o' me knows," was the flustered reply; for O'Shea began to feel decidedly uncomfortable. "Maybe we've poached on some of their sponge preserves."

"But where's the *Aphrodite*?" asked the baronet, peering round him and seeing nothing in

sight. "O'Shea, I begin to be afraid that we're in bad hands."

"Didn't I tell you so, Lumley?" cried Lorelia, sobbing. "I warned you not to trust yourself among these people; and here you are, with nothing to make us more wretched except having our throats cut."

All this time, since the first pirate had looked aboard, they had seen nothing of the felucca's crew. She must have had a steersman and hands, but the tall bulwarks hid them from view.

Presently, finding themselves left entirely alone in the boat, the courage of all began to revive; and O'Shea proposed in a whisper that he should cut the painter, and that they should try to pull away. Sir Lumley assented, and made ready the oars to put out, while O'Shea opened his pocket-knife.

But no sooner did the blade come near the rope, than in a trice a dozen heads were thrust over the bulwarks, while a torrent of Greek imprecations convinced them that they were watched.

O'Shea pretended not to understand, and continued sawing away at the rope, when, "flash! bang!" went a pistol, and a bullet whizzed close to his head and splashed into the sea beside him, causing him to drop his work in a hurry. That sort of Greek makes itself quickly understood.

But the attempt seemed to have satisfied their captors that some new plan was necessary, for they crowded to the side of the felucca and began to call them by words and signs to come on board.

Again their Greek made itself comprehended in short order, for when Sir Lumley shook his head and called out, "No! No!" one of the mustached and kilted mariners deliberately pulled out a huge Turkish pistol, with a bore about an inch in diameter, and blazed away into the bottom of the boat, close to Sir Lumley's feet, starting such a leak that the boat began to fill in a hurry.

After that little lesson in modern Greek there was no more hesitation, aunt Lorelia being one of the first to scramble up the side of the felucca, so that they were soon on board a large, dirty Mediterranean sponge-vessel, as it seemed to be, with greasy and sandy decks, a strong smell of stale fish and oil, while the most ferocious lot of cutthroats in the shape of a crew crowded curiously round them.

Every man was armed to the teeth, with knives and pistols stuck in silk sashes; and they all looked as if they would use them in a moment, as indeed they would. They were as handsome a lot of villains, too, as ever were seen, tall and slender, with pure classical profiles and long black curls and mustaches.

Aunt Lorelia, with all her terror couldn't help thinking of Byron's Conrad and other picturesque scamps, and fancying herself a new Medora, (of uncertain age.)

Once on board, however, they were treated with perfect courtesy. The sailors saluted them with:

"*Kalméra, keerie*," to the men, "*Kalméra guinie*," to the ladies; which, as they already knew, was the common salutation.

Then they were motioned to the stern of the felucca, where they were provided with seats on a bench; and the vessel squared away her broad sails to the south wind, and left the shores of Crete behind, stretching away toward the distant coast of Greece itself, barely visible on the northern horizon after the shores of Crete had sunk beneath the waves.

Where were they going and what were these sponge-fishers doing in the rôle of pirates? None of them could tell; but an uneasy sense of something impending took possession of all as night fell, and still the felucca held on her course.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MR. SOCRATES.

THE native home of the brigand, pure and simple, has been found in Greece for a good many years. The Bandits of the Abruzzi in Italy, and the road-agents of Australia and early California, are much like them in general characteristics; but they have not yet attained the perfect system of plunder and terrorism which marks the Greek brigand in his native mountains.

All the efforts of the Greek government to-day are unable to stamp out this peculiar feature of Greek society, and it will probably never be done, till the country is as thickly populated as England.

The brigands live in the mountains, because Greek mountains are nearly inaccessible to anything but goats and Greek robbers.

They keep near the Turkish frontier, so that, if the Greek troops chase them, they can quickly escape into neutral territory. If the Turks take offense at their pranks on Moslem soil then they are back in Greece and have become ardent patriots in a very few hours.

All the villagers know them; fear them, hide them; lie for them; pay blackmail to them; and share their plunder whenever the bandits come into houses for a week's debauch after a good haul.

Such are the Greek brigands to-day. Fifty years ago they varied their little amusements on land by piratical expeditions at sea, till screw steamers and heavy guns rendered that sort of thing too dangerous. Their present piracies are therefore confined to the persons of brother Greeks of other provinces, poor devils of Syrian fruit merchants and such like. They avoid foreigners, whose governments have steamships, carrying big guns.

Up in the wildest fastnesses of the Morean mountains lived for a good many years a very picturesque and remarkably wicked old person of the name of Keerie Sokráhtis, or as we should call him Mr. Socrates.

Mr. Socrates, in the spring of 1877, rejoiced in a very venerable white beard, which gave him the appearance of his distinguished namesake of old, but which did not prevent him from being the most daring, the richest and the most successful brigand of Greece since the days of Hadji Stavros, made famous by Edmund About.

Keerie Sokráhtis was dressed in the usual gorgeous style of Greek brigands, most of his fortune being on his person or those of his sons and daughters, in the shape of gold and jewels. Among other evidences of wealth, he possessed about a dozen American revolvers, of the old pattern, very rare in Greece except among the regular troops, and he knew how to use them.

Keerie Sokráhtis, or Mr. Socrates, (as we will call

him for the sake of our readers,) was looking out over the beautiful panorama below; the bay of Egina; Athens; the Piræus; the thousand islands of the blue Ægean sea; the olive-clad hills of Attica, and the white ruins of old temples; when he heard the cry of an owl in broad daylight, and smiled, well pleased.

It was the signal that there were travelers coming that way, and that the sentries of the band had espied them.

The thrifty old gentleman instantly dropped behind a rock on which he had been leaning, took off his gold-embroidered cap, stuck his head into the midst of a tuft of heather among the rocks, and peered out into the pass below.

He and his band had a way of taking toll of all people passing on the mountain road from Athens to Turkey, through the renowned defile of Thermopylae.

Presently he saw the leaders of a large party of men coming up the rugged road. At the head was a dark, handsome gentleman, on a mare of wonderful beauty, closely followed by a lady in a dark blue habit, equally well mounted, and Mr. Socrates grinned with delight, as he said to himself:

"These are English chickens; they will bear a good deal of plucking."

After the lady and gentleman came a long string of pack-mules, each guarded by a couple of men on foot, all of whom wore a Greek uniform of some sort.

Old Socrates counted forty men, and began to doubt whether he could dispose of them so easily as he had at first thought, when his attention was attracted by a noise above his head.

Turning quickly, for brigands are always nervous about things above them, he beheld the bright barrel of a carbine leveled at him, the noise being caused by the cocking of the piece.

To see a gun and to fight back, were with Mr. Socrates but one idea, and out came one of his famous revolvers in a minute, when he was arrested by a voice shouting down to him:

"The hill's full of them. Don't fire!"

He recognized the voice of his own lieutenant; and a moment later out came his band, twenty-three in number, all told, looking chop-fallen. They seemed to have been for once completely entrapped.

Mr. Socrates saw gun-barrels on the top of every rock above him, saw the travelers in front of him calmly halting, and finally concluded that the best thing he could do was to come boldly out and claim to be a peaceable peasant.

Therefore Mr. Socrates put up his pistol; pulled out his sash as broad as he could get it, to cover his arsenal; then walked out as meekly as any nice old gentleman taking a stroll, and remarked, affably:

"*Kalméra, keerie*; *Kalméra, guinie*" (Good-day, sir; good-day, ma'am).

The lady and gentleman in front smiled at him, and the gentleman said, in very good Romaic:

"Good-day, Mr. Socrates. I am very happy to meet you, at last. I wish you to do a little favor, for which I will pay you liberally."

Mr. Socrates bowed to the ground.

"I am the lowest slave of your very distinguished excellency. I took you for a captain of the army, come to take me into Athens."

The gentleman smiled again.

"Oh, no. I have too much sympathy with everything free to wish to put even a tiger in a cage. These are only my servants. Please to show me where you live."

Mr. Socrates hesitated. The stranger divined the cause and went on in the same gentle way.

"You do not know who I am. I will tell you. Have you ever heard of the Duke of Diamantina?"

Mr. Socrates pulled his beard in a meditative way.

"No, keerie, if your excellency is pleased to pardon me."

"The Turks call me the Lord of all Jewels. I see that you have a very handsome yataghan there. Let me exchange this for it."

And he drew from under his coat a small revolver, barrel and cylinder heavily gilt, while the butt positively blazed with diamonds, set in rough silver.

Keerie Sokráhtis uttered a cry of rapture and exchanged weapons in a twinkling. He was an old person of uncommon judgment.

"Your excellency is worthy to be the King of Greece," he protested, "and has only to give his orders for me to obey them."

"Then show me where you live," smiled Diamantina, and the venerable professor of pillage obeyed. He had not very far to go.

The roads in that vicinity were so little frequented that Mr. Socrates and his friends had no need to hide their ordinary habitations.

He conducted the duke up a narrow bridle-path to a little plateau on the top of a hill, which commanded an extensive view of the country round, where was set up a rude lean-to of poles, thatched with straw, before which the embers of a fire showed the kitchen of the band, such as it was.

The Duke of Diamantina looked round him, and observed, quietly:

"This is not your stronghold. Where is that?"

"Far from here," answered Mr. Socrates, evasively. "We have more than one."

"Well," replied the duke, "in that case this must do for awhile. I wish to hold a little private talk with you. Order all your band back out of hearing."

Keerie Sokráhtis obeyed, much mystified, and the attendants all retired to a distance, from whence they observed the duke and the lady talking earnestly with the old robber-chief for nearly half an hour.

At the end of that time Mr. Socrates was heard to say aloud:

"Your excellency shall be satisfied. On my head be it."

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN A SPERONARE.

CLARENCE HART was doomed to experience a good many mystifications before he again saw either the duke or Dom Gil. The Euphrosyne, on which he embarked for Cyprus, was one of Mr. Papadoulos's vessels, and she proved to be a slow sailer, without a single man on board who understood anything but Greek, and Hart found he had plenty of time to learn the new language.

Whenever the wind was favorable, the Eu-

phrosyne sailed toward Larnaca, but whenever it shifted she did not attempt to hold her course, but let it carry her away where it would.

Thus it was three weeks from the time he left Alexandria before he reached Cyprus, which is only three days' easy sailing, and as he had expected, found that the duke's yacht had gone. Following out his instructions, he landed and crossed the island to Nikosia, on the northern shore, where he expected to find "Al Djemmel" (The Camel) the duke's provision ship. But no ship was there; nothing but a few feluccas and brigantines loading with copper for Stamboul, and one little Greek craft with a half-deck and single mast, whose skipper, hearing of his dilemma, told him the Djemmel had sailed for Athens, and offered to take him there.

Beginning to feel angry as well as puzzled at the way in which he was being treated, he accepted the offer, determined, in case he did not find his eccentric employer at Athens, to throw up the job and write home to his mother, telling her how he had found and lost the long sought Gilbert Carver.

The Greek *speronare* (for such is the name of that sort of craft) proved a much faster sailer than the Euphrosyne and soon took him past Smyrna, Aleppo and all the other towns on the coast of Asia Minor, touching at Crete and passing Negropont, till one fine day the skipper pointed out a dim line of purple hills toward the sunset and said to Hart with a smile:

"*Na to Athenie, keerie*" (There is Athens, sir).

And Clarence looked out with a strange leaping of his heart, as he recognized for the first time a cluster of white dots on the face of the hills which he knew to be the far-famed capital of old Greece.

This was Athens, and he had seen it at last from the deck of such a little Greek boat as once might have carried St. Paul and his fortunes.

Then he scanned the sea all round, and noticed that there was quite a crowd of sails in sight, all pressing toward the north, and realized that he was in one of the great avenues of Eastern trade.

There were stately square-rigged English merchantmen going to Stamboul, French luggers and *chasse-marées*, Spanish, Italian and Greek feluccas and *speronares*, all under a cloud of sail, all beautiful and picturesque.

Crossing their bows and standing toward the coast of the Morea, was a large felucca with three masts, brown sails and a general dirty appearance.

Hart asked the Greek captain what was this felucca, for he was beginning to understand Romaic pretty well by this time, and received for answer:

"Only a sponge-fisher, keerie. They're always dirty and most of them are full of thieves."

Hart took little more notice of the dirty sponge-vessel which they were rapidly overhauling, for she was a slow sailer, till just as they were passing her, he was amazed to hear his own name pronounced in a woman's voice, in accents of one imploring help.

"Clarence! Clarence! Help!"

For a moment he thought he must be dreaming. The voice was the voice of Helen Lawton, the woman he loved, and who, as he thought, loved him.

Where did it come from? There was nothing in sight but that dirty sponge-felucca, and on her decks he could see only a few picturesque ruffians in Greek costume, with long knives in their sashes.

They were busied in the ordinary tasks of Mediterranean sailors coming near land, getting the anchor ready, coiling away the superfluous ropes, and did not seem to notice the *speronare*.

Presently he heard the voice again, and this time there was no mistake.

"Clarence! Clarence Hart! For God's sake, help us!"

He stared at the felucca, which was about fifty feet to leeward, and felt sure the voice came from thence.

But where was Helen?

He went to the side and peered anxiously at the felucca, when Helen's voice cried:

"We are here in the cabin. We are pris—"

The voice abruptly stopped, and Hart soon saw the reason why.

One of the picturesque and ruffianly Greeks on deck had heard her, and now rushed below, baring his long knife.

Clarence shouted out in Romaic to the felucca's people:

"Whom have you in the cabin?"

The men looked at the *speronare* in surprise and seemed to notice for the first time that the little trader had one of the "Western lords" on board. Hart's puggaree hat informed them.

They held a short confused consultation together in low tones, and then one of them called out:

"Mind your own affairs. Keep out of our way, if you want a whole skin."

In a moment Hart's blood was up. He had seen so much of the bullying ways of Europeans in the East that he felt he must do a little bluster on his own account.

Therefore he mustered all the Romaic he knew, and called out, in a commanding tone:

"Give up that lady at once, or I'll have your vessel sunk."

The spokesman of the Greeks gave a coarse laugh, made a gesture of contempt, and retorted:

"If you don't sheer off I'll kill you, old dog-face."

Hart could hardly help a smile at the epithet "*kinopees*" (dog-face) as he heard it. This Greek mariner was abusing him in the same words which Homer puts in the mouth of Achilles, when he berates Agamemnon in the Iliad.

To enforce his own reply he turned the belt he wore under his loose sack-coat, and brought his two revolvers, a present from the duke, to the front.

"If you don't heave-to at once, I'll make a hole in you," he answered.

The next moment every Greek on the felucca had out a pistol of some sort, and was blazing away at him.

But inasmuch as they were all large, old-fashioned flint-lock concerns, most of them missed fire; and all that went off missed him; for it is by no means easy to hit a man in a chopping sea, when both marksmen and mark are bobbing up and down before a brisk gale.

Naturally Hart was not the man to stand this sort of thing quietly, and out came his two revolvers in all their glory of ivory butts and white plating.

Watching his chance, he sent three or four shots

whistling into the felucca, and had the satisfaction of seeing one of his assailants drop, with a ball in his leg.

But before he could do more, the captain and crew of the speronare were hanging on him all round, begging him not to endanger their lives and liberty. The sponge-fishers would have a grudge against the vessel, and would pay it off after the keerie had gone away.

Clarence felt so angry with the ruffians of the felucca that for a time he felt as if he would like to board her, single-handed, and run a muck through all her crew. He saw that their firearms were not to be relied on, while his own pistols would put a ball just where he wanted.

But, while he was still in hesitation as to what to do, not willing to abandon Helen, and yet hardly knowing how to make the timid crew of the speronare follow him, the sound of a light signal gun in the offing attracted his attention, and looking out past the sponge-boat he saw the white sails of Diamantina's beautiful felucca yacht, trimmed flat, stretching out of a crowd of other vessels, about half a mile to leeward, and running off to the south-east.

Instantly his mind was made up. "You see that felucca. Put me on board of her and I'll give you two liras in gold (\$8) at once," he said to the timid Greek captain, who delightedly obeyed, glad to get out of the scrape at any cost. The speronare shifted her helm and ran down toward the yacht before the wind, while Hart shook his pistol menacingly back at the felucca, where the Greek vagabonds were hastily trying to reload and prime their weapons.

In twenty minutes thereafter the American was saluting the Duke of Diamantina on his own quarter-deck, and hurriedly telling him Helen's position, imploring him to rescue her.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE QUARREL.

THE Duke of Diamantina listened to the American's impassioned account of what he had seen and heard with the calm and smiling dignity which never left him. The yacht continued to run on to the south-east, and sails were crossing and recrossing the track all the time, so that it would soon be very difficult to identify any vessel in the crowd, unless of very remarkable appearance.

When Clarence had finished, the duke asked: "My dear sir, what do you wish me to do?" "To rescue her once more, as you did before. Think how easy it will be. There is the pirate or whatever she is, a slow sailer, and here are you, in a clipper. Let us put about and go after those villains. Oh, duke, can you hesitate?"

"My dear sir," answered the other, with the same bland smile, "I would do much to oblige you; but are you quite certain you know what you want?"

"I want you to rescue a lady from the power of pirates," retorted Clarence, impatiently.

"My dear sir, there are no pirates left in these seas now," replied his companion with the same irritating calm.

"But I tell your grace I heard the lady call to me for help and tell me she was a prisoner in the cabin of that felucca," cried Hart, getting more and more impatient.

Diamantina looked at him gravely. "My dear sir, you have told me you are in love. Believe me, it was a dream, a fantasy of the head, the heart, the any thing. The lady is in no danger."

Quite disheartened, Clarence turned away. He had never before met the impassive firmness of the duke set against his own will, and he felt that a struggle was useless.

He made a last effort. "Then your grace refuses to help this unfortunate lady by putting the yacht about?"

"My dear sir, I am going to the island of Negropont to meet Dom Gil, about whom you were asking in Alexandria. Do you wish to see him, sir?"

Clarence halted in the uneasy walk he had been taking across the quarter-deck, and answered in a constrained tone of voice:

"No, duke. I am sorry I came on board. If the speronare had not gone I would go back in her to Athens. As it is, the first land we touch, I ask your grace to set me ashore upon. I resign my post."

Diamantina looked at him with steady, glowing eyes for several seconds ere he answered.

"Sir, if I take you at your word, you will be sorry for it."

"Never," retorted Clarence, hotly. "I know who you are, and your cause for enmity against the Lawtons; but I did not think it would extend to a helpless lady, who was not born at the time that—"

The duke interrupted him with a slight wave of the hand.

"Monsieur Hart, it is enough," he said. "I accept your resignation as a secretary. Do not force me to be rude to my guest. If you will descend into the cabin you will find madame my mother there, who will endeavor to entertain you till we reach the island of Negropont."

But Clarence was too much in love and too frantic at the thought of Helen's danger to listen to him. He continued to expostulate:

"Your grace was ready to save her on the coast of Arabia. Why not now?" he asked, despairingly.

Then Diamantina stepped toward him, his face transformed.

His black eyes glowed like burning coals, his white teeth shone as his lips parted under the jetty mustache, and his voice sunk to a low, angry whisper of intense passion.

"Because I choose, sir. Is that an answer to you? Who are you that dare to question me?"

Then Clarence laughed and met his eyes with a look as fierce as his own.

"Who am I? An American. In my land we are all kings. Do you understand me, sir? I dare speak to any man who is cruel to a woman. In America we call one who abuses a lady a cowardly villain."

For a moment Hart fancied the duke was about to spring on him. All the hot blood of his Aryan ancestors glowed in his face; his lips parted in a sort of tigerish snarl, and his eyes glared wildly.

Involuntarily the American started toward him, as if to meet him with a blow, for the fighting instinct was roused in both men.

Then Diamantina suddenly sobered down; the frown left his face, and he resumed his usual icy manner as he said:

"Sir, I left the lady with her father. I decline to interfere with her, now that she is in his control. You will not go into the cabin? Good-day."

And the duke, with a slight and haughty inclination of his head, passed Hart and went down-stairs into the cabin, leaving the American alone on deck.

Then, for the first time, Clarence began to feel a great deal of shame and embarrassment at his position. He was not a rich man, and had exhausted most of his savings, since leaving the navy, in hunting for that mythical Gilbert Carver he began to think he would never see.

The sum he had received from Papadoulos, Demetri & Co. was yet untouched; but he felt that he was a pensioner on the duke's bounty while it remained in his pocket. He paced to and fro for a few minutes, and then took a sudden determination to leave the yacht on the first vessel that passed, no matter where bound. Hotheaded and in love, his resolution was quickly put in practice.

The yacht was continually passing vessels, and he noticed a large felucca, which he judged from its rig to be Maltese, coming to meet them and heading for Athens.

He asked the man at the wheel to steer that way, and the sailor, a slim, swarthy Lascar, obeyed, without a word showing either surprise or remonstrance.

No sooner were they within fair hailing distance than he called out in Italian:

"Will you take me into Athens for a lira Turco?" (about \$4).

"*Sì, signor, sì!*" was the eager answer, and the felucca came up close alongside, grazing the yacht as she passed, when Clarence with the expertness of an old man-of-war's-man, leaped into her main rigging and found himself on board the Maltese.

As he turned to look back, there was Diamantina, with the princess Melapetros, standing in the cabin-hatch, both looking at him wistfully. All the coldness and anger seemed to have vanished from the face of the duke, while the princess was actually in tears.

Feeling guilty, why or how he did not exactly understand, Clarence forbore to do what he had been just on the point of doing—throwing the duke's money back on board the yacht. It seemed to him at that moment too much like a causeless insult to one who had been, up to that moment, as kind and generous as only a prince could be.

Thus it was with an air of rather shamefaced respect that he took off his hat and waved his last farewell, pointing to Athens; and the princess smiled back at him through her tears, and waved her handkerchief, as if in salute.

Then the vessel parted, the yacht speeding on one tack, while the Maltese went on the other; and Hart found himself once more alone in the world, hunting after a dirty sponge-boat among a hundred other craft exactly alike, to find, if he could, the lady of his love.

He turned away to inspect the craft on which he had so unceremoniously intruded, and found her to be a large Maltese felucca, in ballast, going to Athens for a cargo of olive oil and currants.

The skipper was a common specimen of the ignorant but shrewd sailor of the Mediterranean, with a little smattering of education, enough to enable him to read a bill of lading, and a large experience of every coast on the northern shores of the sea, from Barcelona to Stamboul.

The vessel was a smart sailer, and the houses of Athens were in sight from her decks within an hour after he left Diamantina's yacht, so that before sunset our hero was treading the quay at the Piræus, and looking up to the Acropolis, casting over in his mind all sorts of schemes for recovering Helen Lawton from her captors.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ON BOARD THE FELUCCA.

IT is time that we returned to the Lawtons and O'Shea, whom we left aboard that piratical-looking sponge-felucca, and find out how it was that Helen managed to call out to Hart, and where they were all going.

The fact was that, the next day after leaving Crete, the English party had been taken down to a cabin with a decided flavor of stale sardines about it, where the ladies had been locked in, while Sir Lumley and O'Shea were taken forward and put down in the hold among the sponges.

What became of them neither Helen nor Lorelia knew after they were taken away, and their only occupation left was to look out of the little round windows in the stern of the felucca over the sparkling sea, and long for some English ship to come within hailing distance.

Who were their captors they knew no more than at first. They had been offered no violence, were supplied with plenty of food, such as it was; and no attempt was made to rob them of any of their valuables.

Nevertheless they were kept in strict captivity, and it was with a feeling of positive rapture that Helen Lawton, looking out of the window in the afternoon of the second day, saw the little speronare pass under their stern, and recognized on her deck the well-known figure of Clarence Hart, in his white Egyptian suit and puggaree hat.

It was with the first rapturous instinct of hope that she screamed out, "Clarence! Clarence! help!"

She saw him start and look earnestly at the felucca, and felt aunt Lorelia crowding up eagerly beside her as she repeated the cry:

"Clarence, Mr. Hart, we are here in the cabin. Help us!"

But it was not to be, that time.

She heard a bustle on deck, and then one of the pirates came rushing down the hatch into the cabin, swearing away in Greek at a tremendous rate, flourishing a knife, and making himself so offensive that there was no sort of misconception of his meaning in any language.

He caught poor Lorelia by the hair at the back of her head, gave it a jerk, intending to pull her back; and instead of that, pulled the whole of it off, and flung it into the corner of the cabin.

Poor Miss Lawton, appalled at the loss of her new switch, fell on her knees with a wild scream, when

this picturesque but unmannerly ruffian turned on Helen, brandished his knife close to her face and told her, as plain as signs could say, that if she went to that window any more, he would cut off her nose.

Naturally both these timid women were scared by his thundering voice and furious manner, and shrunk away into corners of the cabin in silence, while the sounds of shots overhead announced that quite a little battle was going on up there, on account of the ladies.

It was soon over, and the next intimation they had of what had occurred was when a man came limping down the cabin stairs, dropping blood as he walked, and growling out all the curses in the Greek vocabulary on the head of the "English devil" who had shot him.

Then the poor women felt indeed afraid.

Up to that time they had been treated with so much respect that the cabin had been left to their sole occupancy; but now here were four or five picturesque ruffians, binding up their comrade's leg, before the scandalized Lorelia, and cursing away in Greek all the time.

It seemed as if a change was coming over their captors.

It did not last long, however. As soon as they had tied up their comrade's leg and laid him in one of the bunks to groan and swear at his leisure, the rest of the men went up-stairs, and all was quiet for some time, till the increasing gloom of the cabin warned them that night was coming on.

They could hear through the windows a good deal of creaking and splashing that told of passing ships, while hails in Greek and Italian were frequent, but they did not attempt anything more on their own account in the way of calling for help. If one of them made anything like a motion to go near a stern window the wounded pirate growled at them so fiercely that they were glad to retire, and so matters went on till it was pitch dark, the two women clinging together in terror, while the noise outside had sunk to quietness and was slowly superseded by the hollow rumbling of surf on rocks.

At last the motion of the vessel became easier, showing that she was entering some sheltered inlet; and after a while they heard the creak and rattle of ropes and blocks made by lowering sails, and the sullen splash of the anchor as it dropped into the water.

Then one of the Greek sailors looked down the hatch and called out what sounded like:

"*Ikkany sfoce.*"

Helen was as ignorant of Greek as most young ladies, but she had a kind of notion that this meant, "Come up, you two!" and she was right; for the flaring light of a torch was soon held at the mouth of the hatchway, and one of the sailors received them with a low bow and motioned them to the side, where a boat was waiting for them.

Helen looked timidly up and around her, and saw that they were in a small sheltered cove, surrounded with abrupt black precipices that shut out all view, and made her feel as if they were in the bottom of a well. On these rocks, on the side toward which she was gazing, she saw a group of men in Greek costume, with bright flaring torches, the light shining on their long guns and the knives and pistols with which their sashes bristled.

In the boat sat her father, his head bowed on his breast, his whole attire indicating dejection, while the dull gleam of handcuffs and anklets showed that he had been harshly treated.

O'Shea was nowhere to be seen. As soon as she saw her father Helen stepped into the boat and would have gone to him, when one of the Greeks shook his head and pointed to a place in the stern-sheets, where he compelled her to sit with her aunt.

Not a word was spoken as they rowed to shore, till one of the Greeks clapped Sir Lumley familiarly on the shoulder, and cried:

"*Ikkany, ikkany!*" (Come, come.)

Then the baronet started out of his stupor of dejection and submitted to be led ashore, where he first seemed to notice that Helen was with them.

"My child!" he muttered with a pitiable attempt at a smile; "this is a sad meeting."

Then one of his guards pulled him roughly away, and he was hustled off by a crowd of fellows worse looking than the piratical sponge-fishers. About the latter there might be a doubt; but there was no question as to these fellows. They were thoroughbred bandits, and Helen realized that her whole family was in their power.

Trembling and in silence, the two women followed their captors up a steep rocky path, which wound in and out among the rocks till they had lost sight of the haven into which they had come, when they halted in a little valley, nestled between two spurs of the hills, and found there three ponies, two of which were saddled for ladies.

Obedient signs rather than words, the two Misses Lawton mounted these animals, which at once set off at a brisk trot, and prevented them seeing what became of Sir Lumley, who was left behind.

Beside each pony ran a pair of tall mountaineers, keeping pace with the animal with apparent ease, and behind them they heard a good deal of shouting and laughing, which Helen did not dare to interpret to herself.

She had heard horrible stories of the cruelties of the Greek brigands to their captives, and feared that they were treating her father with indignity, but did not dare to look back to see if her suspicions were well founded. She knew she could not help him, and hoped she was mistaken.

Thus they rushed on through the night, always at the same pace, the horses in a sharp trot, the men running on as if weariness were a thing unknown to them.

How long they went on in this way Helen could not tell, tired and jolted to pieces as she was, sore and miserable; but the red streaks of dawn were blushing in the eastern sky when they came to a halt at last, in the midst of a wild confusion of rocks and mountains, and her conductors began to make peculiar calls into the darkness round them, imitating the cries of goats.

Pretty soon the whole party was clustered together in the midst of the valley, and Helen looked round her for her father. All she could see was a prostrate form, that seemed to be tied face downward on the back of the third pony, and full of horror at the idea that he was dead, she jumped off her horse, ran to the other, and cried frantically:

"Father, father, speak to me! Say you are alive."

"Only just," muttered Sir Lumley, in a hoarse whisper; "the wretches—have nearly—killed me—Nelly."

The brigands made no attempt to separate them now. On the contrary, they seemed to be trying to make up for their harshness on the road, for they took Sir Lumley off his horse, cutting the ropes with which he was tied, and laid him gently on the grass. One of them even handed Helen a small flask of arrack, with signs to give some to her father, who seemed completely exhausted.

Poor Sir Lumley swallowed a few mouthfuls of the fiery liquid, which restored him so much that he was able to sit up and tell the story of how he came in such a pitiable plight.

"They tied me to the beast's tail and made me run with my hands tied behind me. They pricked me up when I fell with their knives," he groaned. "Then, when I let the horse drag me, not caring whether I lived or died, they fastened me on as you saw, and here I am."

Poor Helen wept bitterly over her father's woes, and aunt Lorelia came close to them as if for sympathy, shuddering and crying:

"Oh, Lumley, I told you how it would be when we left Alexandria in that odious vessel. Why didn't you stick to our own steamers? Here we are, in the midst of murderers and cannibals; and Heaven only knows when we shall ever get out, if at all."

Sir Lumley could only groan for answer as he looked at the grim faces of the brigands.

CHAPTER XXXV. THE BRIGANDS.

WHILE they were discussing their position and groaning the dawn was advancing, and they could see the faces and costume of their captors. In spite of their position Helen could not help admiring the beauty of both.

The features and figure of so many Apollos, all attired in velvet jackets and leggings, white silk kilts and a profusion of gold embroidery, would have warmed the heart of a French artist let loose among them.

Presently they heard the scream of a hawk among the rocks, and out rode a tall patriarchal-looking old villain, with a long beard and curls that swept his shoulders, all of the most dazzling white. He was mounted on one of the little hill ponies, and his dress fairly blazed with gold as he came to meet them, when all the band raised a shout of:

"*Al! Al! Keerie! Al!*"

"Who is that?" asked Helen of one of her captors, indicating the advancing old man. The bandit threw back his black curls with a proud toss as he answered:

"*Na to Keerie Sokráhtié, guínte.*" (That is Lord Socrates, woman.)

Naturally Helen did not understand anything of this except the name; and that conveyed no idea to her mind, for she had never heard of this particular professor of highway robbery.

But Mr. Socrates soon set all her doubts at rest by coming up and saying in English:

"I am charm, much charm to see Sare Lomlee. I 'ave expect eem for some a time-a."

Sir Lumley looked wearily up.

"Expected me? What do you mean?"

"I mean that we 'ave hear of de so beauteeful vatch you 'ave wid de ladies. I read de papers, sare, and ve get de *Bord du Nil*. Charm to see you. We shall enjoy de mountains ver' moch, dis time."

Sir Lumley looked up at him, and saw that the old man's keen black eyes were bent on him with a curious and malicious expression, as if he enjoyed the prospect of torturing him.

"We are in your power and must pay for it," answered the baronet, sullenly. "How much do you want for our lives and liberties?"

"How moch?" said Mr. Socrates, in a meditative tone. "Let me see. You are English milordo. You 'ave de great estate in England."

"No such thing," interrupted Sir Lumley, hastily. "I'm a poor man. I've only got my savings."

"Yes, sare, I know. Dey are feeftée t'ousand guenee Ingles in de fou' (you call 'im fond?) and de vatch, and bracelets, and necklace of de late Rajah of Krishnapoor. Is dat not true?"

Mr. Socrates laughed in a silvery manner as he consulted a little book from which he read out these items, and watched Sir Lumley's face.

"Your bankair in Athens is M. de Rosenbaum, sare, and 'e is de agent for Barings, of London, who hold de trust of your fond. Is it not true, sare?"

Sir Lumley felt the sweat roll down his face as he stammered:

"How do you know my affairs?"

"Dat is beezee-ness, sare. I would be poor man if I did not keep de record of de travaillair. My men 'ave vatch you since you sail in de Aphrodite, and de captain 'e be great friend of mine. Ve call eem Keerie Glypteros."

Sir Lumley tried to smile.

"That is no news. We felt sure he was a traitor when the Aphrodite left us. Come, how much do you want for us?"

"Feeftée t'ousand guenee Ingles, and de jewel," was the bland response of Mr. Socrates.

Sir Lumley staggered up from the ground and faced the chief in indignation that banished his fears as he cried:

"You shall never have it. I'll die first."

Mr. Socrates rubbed his hands together as if he was very well pleased at the retort.

"Dat is ver' good, sare. You can die at once whenever you weesh. My son, Alkibiáhdé, will keel you wid de great pleasure. We will take our time about eet."

He spoke to one of the good-looking scamps by his side, who in a moment had tripped up Sir Lumley, when he was seized by four others and held as in a vise, while Mr. Socrates went on:

"We always kill de obstinate people by inches, sare. Alkibiáhdé will begin by knock out your teeth, one at a time, wid de butt of his pistol. Den ve vill cut off your fingares, one by one. Ve vill give you an hour between each loss, to give you a leetle chance to change your mind. Now, sare, ve vill begin. *Alkibiáhdé, lyptie to Keerie.*"

But Sir Lumley had heard enough, and knew the meaning of the last words well enough, ("Alcibiades, hit the gentleman.") not to try and save himself.

Struggling fiercely he shouted out, as well as he could:

"Wait a minute. I'll pay."

Mr. Socrates waved his hand, and Sir Lumley was set on his feet, while the brigands who had been holding back Helen and Lorelia from any sort of interference released them.

The women at once rushed to Sir Lumley and clung around him, imploring him to save his life, to consent to anything rather than be tortured to death, and the baronet visibly trembled. There was something so appalling in the method of death promised by the smiling brigand, and his exemplary family were so obviously eager to begin operations, that Sir Lumley was demoralized. He tried to make a bargain.

"Come, Keerie Sokráhtié," he said; "don't let's get into a passion. You don't want to take all I have in the world and leave me a beggar. I'll give you a check for a thousand pounds. Won't that do?"

Keerie Sokráhtié shook his head with the same bland smile.

"Oh, no, sir. I must 'ave an order on Monsieur Rosenbaum for all de stock in de fou' (funds,) transfer to my name, through Meestare Baring, in London."

"But, what use would that be to you?" asked Sir Lumley, in desperation. "They would never pay it to you, without you were identified in London."

"Pardon, sare," was the oily answer. "I am well known in London. I bank with M. Baring myself."

"But, if I do any such thing I shall be left a beggar," urged Sir Lumley.

The old brigand shrugged his shoulders with the same bland smile.

"You are not seexty yet, sare, and you 'ave de ceveel serveece. I 'ave to live as I can, sare."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Sir Lumley, suddenly. "I'll divide with you. Will that do, Keerie Sokráhtié?"

The old Greek pulled out a snuff-box.

"No, sare, it will not do," he said, as he opened it.

"I want" (here he took a pinch) "feeftée" (pinch) "t'ousand pound," (sniff) "and de jewel" (sniff) "of de late Rajah of Krishnapoor. If you do not decide in t'ree minute, I tell Alkibiáhdé to beegen again."

Then he put up his snuff-box, turned his pony's head and walked the animal away several paces to where the men had just kindled a rousing fire. The shuddering group of prisoners saw that they were heating some old knives red-hot in the fire.

Then Sir Lumley, with a great effort, said to his sister:

"Lorelia, we must give up your watch. Have you the bracelets and necklace with you, there?"

Pale and trembling, Lorelia hastily took off that fatal watch, with a splendid necklace and bracelets of emerald, which she habitually wore under her dress, and held them out as Keerie Sokráhtié rode back to them. The old brigand took them with a bow.

"Now, sare," he said to Sir Lumley, "we are ready. Will you sign the order, or shall we cut you into leetel pieces? We are ready now."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

RETRIBUTION.

As Keerie Sokráhtié spoke, his smile became particularly wicked and full of triumphant meaning, so that Helen hid her face on her father's breast, while Lorelia shrieked and shuddered.

Sir Lumley turned very pale and answered, hastily:

"I consent. I'll sign anything you like. Then you will let me go, I suppose?"

"When we 'ave make secure de 'ole beezeness, sare," was the cautious reply.

Then Mr. Socrates turned to his men and called out something in Greek, as he dismounted from his horse.

The handsome Alkibiáhdé advanced to his father's side, took the horse and dashed off among the hills like a regular rough rider, while Mr. Socrates, now all mellifluous courtesy, went through the formality of introducing Sir Lumley to his whole band, the members of which bowed with stately gravity as their names were mentioned.

"These, sare, are my nine sons," said the old robber, proudly. "Aristioú, Stefano, Tokioú, Aristotélié, Periklé, Demetri, Teseo, Sofoklé, and Alkibiáhdé, who is gone. Dese are my cousins, twenty-three of dem, and dere is our leetel familee. You like dem, sare?"

Sir Lumley gloomily assented, for he could say no less; and Mr. Socrates proceeded to give another long string of modernized classical names, as he proudly paraded his interesting family of cut-throats.

"I 'ave rule de mountain since I was a boy, sare. De Turk and de Greek dey all fear me, and I laugh at de police. Now we will 'ave de dinner, sare."

And the little group of captives soon found themselves sitting down with a band of brigands, who treated them with the most distinguished courtesy, till the return of Mr. Alkibiáhdé, who came racing back with another Greek person of clerical aspect, who wore spectacles and had no weapon save an inkhorn and sachel of papers.

This personage was introduced as "Our cousin, Mr. Sofoklé;" and Mr. Sophocles soon showed himself an admirable English scholar and an adept in business; for he produced an order on English stamped blanks, ready filled in, for Sir Lumley to sign, transferring his stock in the three per cent. consols to "Sofoklé, Sokráhtié and Company, of 98 Strand, London, merchants, for value received."

Sir Lumley signed the order, after another unavailing struggle for terms, which was terminated by the threat of beginning operations with red-hot knives, and then watched with a rueful face the departure of Mr. Sophocles, who galloped away, as the old chief informed him, to Athens, to see to the "beezeness."

"And now, sare," observed Keerie Sokráhtié, "we 'ave settle our leetle affaire. You vill stay 'ere till de return of Keerie Sofoklé wid de monie, and den you s'all go to Athens. In de meantime I 'ave odair leetle t'ing to settle. You vill write out a full confession of de truth in de death of de Rajah of Krishnapoor, to use in de suit for de restoration of his son, Kalidasa." And he rubbed his hands.

Sir Lumley sprung to his feet in excessive astonishment.

"What do you mean?" he almost screamed. "Am I not free yet?"

"From Keerie Sokráhtié, yes, sare; but not from the Duke of Diamantina."

Helen and aunt Lorelia rose in great dismay and alarm, and the elder lady cried out:

"Good heavens, Lumley, what does he mean? The Duke of Diamantina is our friend."

As for Helen she looked at her father in mute amazement for a minute, and then covered her face with her hands, ejaculating:

"And you knew who he was all the time. Would to Heaven we had all died before this came to us."

"But what does he mean?" persisted Lorelia, fretfully. "Who is the duke, Lumley? Can't you answer?"

It was Keerie Sokráhtié who answered for him, for Sir Lumley seemed to be incapable of speech.

"I will call a gentleman who will tell you, madame. 'Ere is Keerie Glypteros."

And down the valley came riding a tall, thin man in blue flannel clothes, whom they recognized in a moment as the treacherous captain of the Aphrodite.

The stranger dismounted close to the fire and came up to Sir Lumley.

"Reckon you've forgotten me," he said. "My name's Carver. The people of Krishnapoor called me Gilkavah when I commanded his highness's body-guard. I had a beard in those days, and it was off when we met in Egypt at the club. Do you remember me yet, Sir Lumley Lawton?"

Sir Lumley was ghastly pale and seemed to be choking, but he managed to whisper:

"In mercy—not before them—"

The Yankee adventurer smiled bitterly.

"Not before them! Your sister and daughter, who have believed you to be an honorable man all these years, when we have known you to be a traitor that bit his benefactor! No; not before them! Mercy! Did you show mercy to the noblest gentleman in India, when you ordered him blown from a British cannon and stole his jewels from the dead body, which rotted away unburied in his own market-place? No, no, Lumley Lawton. Twenty years is long to wait, but our time for justice has come at last. Give us a full confession and restore my boy to his father's throne; or you never leave this place alive."

"I will do it," muttered Lawton, with dry lips.

Carver laughed a short, fierce laugh of satisfaction.

"That's better. We know each other now. Here is the account which I have made of the affair. It tells how you made proposals to the Raneé, and how, in revenge for her rejection, you committed perjury against the Rajah. It tells how you compelled Sergeant O'Shea, of the artillery, to give up the watch, presented him by the Rajah, and conferred it on your sister, telling her you had bought it for her. It recites your knowledge of the innocence of Rajah Kalidasa, and prays the Empress of India to do justice and restore the young Rajah to his proper place. There it is. Will you sign it?"

He handed Sir Lumley a large parchment engrossed in the form of a petition and pointed out some signatures on the foot.

"There is Captain O'Shea's name," he said, "with that of Sergeant Major Dobbs, who was the corporal of the gun and saw the execution. There are the names of nine officers present at the execution, all joining in the petition. Now will you sign it?"

The unhappy baronet read it over, the sweat rolling down his face, while Helen and his sister stood as if paralyzed, watching him in silence.

At last he faltered:

"I cannot do it, man. Life would not be worth having if I owned all that to be true."

Before Carver could answer Helen swept forward, pale and resolute.

"Father," she said, simply, "is this all true?"

Sir Lumley buried his face in his hands and groaned.

She pressed closer to him.

"Don't be ashamed to tell the truth, father. We can make amends for the past if we only tell the truth. I am not afraid to work for you, dear. Anything is better than living a lie all our lives. Is it true?"

"God help me, it is, Helen," he groaned, "and Diamantina is his son. I knew him and Effie the moment I saw them."

"Then sign the petition," was her quiet reply. "If you did them wrong twenty years ago do them right now. I, for one, am ready to bear the result."

Carver had been staring at her in a singular manner all this time without saying a word. Now he beckoned to Keerie Sokráhtié, and the brigands retired to a little distance and left the Lawtons to themselves.

They could see Helen pleading with her father and hear every now and then the querulous tones of Lorelia reproaching them both, but they did not attempt to go near them, and so for a good half-hour the girl pleaded with the man for justice while the bandits looked curiously on.

At last Sir Lumley was heard to call out:

"Give me the paper, in Heaven's name. You wish my public disgrace? Then on your head be the consequences."

Then he came toward them, his face set and desperate, and cried out in tones that showed his fears were all gone:

"Give me pen and ink. I'll sign it on one condition."

"And what is that?" asked Carver.

"That you lend me a pistol and fight me, you! you who have brought all this on me," was the almost frenzied reply.

"You shall have it," answered Carver, promptly; "but sign first."

He took out a gold pen and pencil case from his pocket with a slow deliberation; then brought out a little screw flask of ink which he opened and held ready for Sir Lumley while one of the brigands offered the flat stock of his gun for a hasty writing-desk.

With face of ashy pallor but a firm hand the baronet subscribed the record of his own infamy and then threw down the pen with a deep curse.

The imperturbable Carver calmly picked it up and wrote his own name as witness, after which he dried the paper at the fire, folded it up, put it in his breast pocket, secured his ink-bottle and pen with the same quiet deliberation; then turned to Sir Lumley and observed:

"Now, cunnel, I'm ready for you."
 "Then give me the pistol," snarled Sir Lumley, savagely.
 "I said you should have it and so you shall," was the quiet reply, "but you ain't going to shoot any one of this crowd. Now look here. I'm goin' to give this pistol to Alkibiádhé here. He shall take it down the stream to that big rock and leave it there. If you want it go and get it there."
 To his surprise Sir Lumley nodded as if satisfied.
 "Do as you please," he said. "I only want the pistol."

Then Alkibiádhé set off at a gallop down the valley and the baronet turned to his daughter and shook his finger at her in a menacing manner as he said:

"You made me disgrace myself just now, Helen. I hope you'll be sorry for it before night. Good-by." But before he could go Helen was clinging around him in tears begging him to forgive her, and he relented so far as to kiss her coldly on the brow as he said:

"Good-by. If these gentlemen choose to stop me they can do it. I'm going to Athens on foot to complain to the British consul."

Carver sneered as he went off.
 "All the British consul can do can't hurt us," he called out after Sir Lumley. "Walk off your temper among the mountains. You can't leave them."

He thought that the angry and much humiliated baronet was trying to escape and he well knew the futility of any such attempts. At a sign from him two of the mountaineers rose and went after Sir Lumley whom they saw approach the big stone and stoop for the pistol.

Then the baronet turned toward them and threw up his hands to heaven as if imprecating a curse.

A moment later Helen uttered a fearful shriek and fell senseless to the ground.

At the same instant came a flash and report. Sir Lumley had blown out his brains, unable to bear his impending disgrace and poverty.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

UNCLE AND NEPHEW.

CLARENCE HART, weary and disheartened, sat in the public room of the *Hotel de Pericles*, in Athens, writing a letter home to his mother. He had utterly failed to find Helen Lawton and had been unable even to meet with the supposed sponge-boat in which he had seen her, though he had visited every felucca in the harbor of the Piræus, and sharply scanned every Greek sailor he had met.

He had besieged all the consuls for help, but in vain. None of them would take any trouble on his vague statement of what he had seen, and all seemed to be more or less indifferent about the fate of the Lawtons.

"My dear fellow, they've got among the brigands," said the American consul, "and they'll have to pay a good round sum for their deliverance, that's all. We can't interfere unless you show us where they are. Funny thing about those sponge-fishers, though. Didn't believe there was any trace of piracy left in these seas."

The English consul and all the rest were "sorry, but such things happened every day."

And so poor Clarence sat down with a weary heart to write home to his mother all about his adventures and misfortunes, and especially of the disappearance of Dom Gil Grabador, whom he fancied to be his uncle Gilbert Carver.

While he was still writing away he heard some one cough near him, and looked up, for the cough seemed designed to gain his attention.

There, precise and formal as ever, in his glossy black, sat Mr. Glypteros, the Yankee-Greek partner of Papadoulos, Demetri and company, a grim smile mantling on his yellow visage.

"Waal, Mr. Hart," exclaimed this person, without the slightest ceremony, "if you ain't the con-sarnedest, darnedest, pig-headed son of a sea cook I ever knew, bu'st me into fiddle-strings."

For a moment Clarence was too much amazed to answer, and then he jumped up, demanding furiously:

"What do you mean, sir?" Who are you talking to?"

"To the darndest pig-headed fool in all Athens," was the composed answer. "A feller that ain't got no more brains than a weasel, and ought to be kicked all the way from the Acropolis to the Piræus. What do you say to that, sonny?"

Clarence Hart could hardly believe his eyes and ears. This man was actually jeering at him in a public room, and he looked round him to see if any one was within hearing. There were only two waiters, but they were grinning and his temper rose to fever heat.

He turned furiously round on Mr. Glypteros, and lo! that gentleman had snatched up his letter to his mother and was coolly reading it!

In an instant Hart rushed at him, clutched at the letter, and a moment later was locked in the long nervous arms of Mr. Glypteros, who handled him with the strength of a steam-engine, lifted him as if he had been a child, and finally forced him down into a chair, tripping his feet from under him, remarking dryly:

"No, you don't, sonny! Your uncle's got hold of you, and I want you to know it. The old man ain't lost his gripe yet. No, sir-ree, bob!"

There was something so peculiar in the way in which this was said, with its quaint old-fashioned Americanisms, that Clarence felt all his fury giving way to irresistible laughter, and then an idea suddenly came into his head as he stared at Mr. Glypteros.

"Why, is it possible you are Gilbert Carver after all? What an idiot I've been."

His uncle (for it was of course none other) gave a dry sniff, and made no answer save to smooth out the crumpled letter and read it aloud with comments.

"I cannot help thinking I've found poor uncle Gilbert at last in the person of Dom Gil—Waal, sonny, if you'd not been as blind as a bat, you'd have seen that the first day we met. But alas, I fear I have lost him—I should think so."

Then he turned on Clarence with a face of affected fierceness.

"What made you insult the Duke of Diamantina? Hadn't he been kind enough to you?"

"He had," replied the other, with a blush of embarrassment, "but he refused to let me save Miss

Helen Lawton from the pirates, and now she's lost."

"Oh, that's it, is it? Waal, suppose I show you the lady here in Athens under the duke's protection, what would you say to that?"

"But is it true, sir?"

"Waal, I ain't used to tellin' lies, Clarence, and I say it's so. Say, you're sweet on that girl, ain't you? Own up now."

"If you mean do I love her, sir, you are right," was Clarence's dignified answer. "The lady is one of the best women I know."

Gilbert Carver dropped his slangy way of talking at once as soon as he saw that his nephew felt hurt. He held out his hand and shook that of Clarence warmly and affectionately as he said:

"Clarence, you have spoken the truth. She is one of the noblest women that ever breathed God's air, and if you ever get her you will be a lucky man."

"Ah, sir, there's not much chance of that," said poor Hart, sadly. If she is safe, as you say, with Diamantina, he is the man she will make happy not me. What chance has a poor man like me got to win the child of an English baronet? Don't talk of it, sir. The duke does what he likes with any woman."

Carver uttered a low chuckle.

"And do you think Diamantina would marry Helen Lawton, if she'd have him?"

"Why not, sir? She is not beneath him."

"That's nothing to do with it. Do you suppose he'd marry a girl whose father murdered his father?"

"Why, sir, what—"

"You don't mean to say you don't know who he is?"

"No, sir. I have of course suspected."

"Then ask yourself what possible circumstances could make a match between those two. Your love has blinded you, young man. When the duke warned you away from her he did it to keep you from suffering in the retribution that was yet to come on the Lawtons. Now it has come. Justice has been done. Sir Lumley Lawton is dead."

"Dead, sir?"

"Dead by his own hand; afraid to face the disgrace his own hand wrought for himself. And Helen is alone in the world now."

"Oh, sir, tell me where she is. Let me go to her quickly."

"Stop, Clarence!"

Carver's face was grave as he laid his hand on his nephew's shoulder.

"My boy, twenty years ago that girl's father dragged a noble man to foul disgrace and death. It has been my aim in life to restore the Rajah's son to his father's throne. I brought him up, gave him his education in the wide world, helped his mother to carry off the hidden treasures of Rajah Kalidasa and increased them tenfold by wise trading. You understand now how Papadoulos, Demetri and Co. are only another name for Diamantina's millions. I have amassed those millions for him and he has not been ungrateful. Do you know why we heaped riches?"

"Hardly, sir. I suppose—"

"It was to seat Kalidasa on his father's throne, and that can only be done by the public exposure of Lawton's crime."

"Well, sir, how does that—"

"Concern you? Thus. If you marry Helen Lawton you marry into a family whose shame will soon be published to the world."

"Be it so, sir. She has had no share in the guilt, and should have none in the shame."

"Nevertheless, it will come."

"Then the more need she should have a husband to shield her from the sneers of the world."

"You will marry her then?"

"If she will have me, sir."

"Then you're true grit, boy," answered Carver, a kind look lighting up his rugged features. "I've only been trying you all this time. Come with me!"

Full of wonder Clarence followed his newly-found uncle from the hotel to one of the handsomest houses in Athens.

"Here," said the elder, "is Diamantina's house. Helen is there. I expect you to apologize to the duke for leaving him so rudely the other day."

Clarence flushed up.

"I'll do it, sir," he answered, "though I still think I was right."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CONCLUSION.

BUT, Clarence was never destined to make a formal apology to the Duke of Diamantina. As he entered the house and went into one of the grand saloons with Carver, he was met by the princess, who came running out to greet him as if she had known him from his boyhood, and embraced him—to his intense confusion—and called out to her son:

"Kalidasa, Kalidasa, here is our young prodigal returned! Ah, Monsieur Clarence, how could you think my son would be cruel to zat sweet little lady? She is in there, and we wish you to console her; is it not so, Kalidasa?"

And then Diamantina came forward and clasped his hand with the warmth of an Englishman, while his large eyes were full of tears, and he whispered:

"I have forgiven them all now. He did my father's memory justice, ere he died, and we must repair the injury to his child."

"What do you mean?" asked Clarence, who remembered his uncle's words: "Will you forego the claim to the throne of Krishnapoor in deed?"

"My dear sir," answered the other, with his old sweet smile, "Krishnapoor has forgotten us now, and I have lived long enough in the world to know that, with all her cruelties, England governs the State better than the Rajahs of old did. I shall establish my claim by a private petition, and clear my father's name from obloquy; but, I shall never see India again. My race came from the Caucasus, and to the Caucasus it will return for fresh blood. I myself owe much of my vigor to the white blood of my mother, and have seen too much of civilization to give it up for the lazy barbarism of a Hindoo Rajah. But come; we waste time. I have prepared the lady for your visit, and you will remember that in wooing her you woo as the nephew of my friend and benefactor, Gilbert Carver, and the heir of a fortune such as is not often seen in America. Go in!"

He pointed to the door of the boudoir into which

the Princess Melapetros had just gone, and Clarence entering, found himself in the presence of Helen Lawton in deep black.

New Year's eve, 1879, in the city of Cairo, and the Diamantina Palace is blazing with light within and without, while the strains of the bands playing in Ezbekiah Park mingle with the songs, French, Italian, Greek and Arab that float up to the stars from hundreds of little *cafés chantants* all through the modern quarter of Cairo.

There is a wedding going on at the Diamantina mansion, and the duke is bland and smiling as ever though he is not the bridegroom.

There is the chaplain of the American mission to perform the ceremony, and the bride is none other than the Princess Melapetros, as beautiful as ever, who stands beside a tall, thin man with a long, pointed gray beard, who looks old enough to be her father. His breast covered with gold embroidery, his dark blue uniform, red fez and scimitar, show him to be an officer of rank in the Khedive's service, and the guests all speak of him with respect as Kahvah Pasha, the Intendant of Finances for the new Khedive, Mohammed Tewfik Pasha.

Among the guests we notice a young American face, the wearer dressed in the Egyptian uniform of a lower grade, and having on his arm a beautiful young lady, who is evidently his wife.

"By the powers, Hart Bey," says a voice, close to his elbow, "the old man looks young again, don't he? and as for the princess, bedad, she puts the colleen here to shame for her twenty years!"

The speaker is none other than O'Shea, in evening dress, with a watch chain glittering with diamonds falling over his vest.

Hart Bey smiles.

"Where's Mrs. O'Shea, to-night?" he asks. "Hasn't she come?"

O'Shea winks mysteriously, and says in a whisper, into Hart's ear:

"She never likes to come near the princess; they're the same age!"

Is it true?

It is. Captain O'Shea has married the fair Lorelia, and neither has done so very badly. She has secured a real, live husband, and he has got back not only his watch, but fifty thousand pounds besides, which came to him on his wedding day marked "Sofoklé, Sokráhtié & Co."

Who they were, he never knew, nor did his wife enlighten him, while Helen naturally said nothing on the subject connected with so many painful memories. None the less, it was Sir Lumley's ill-gotten fortune, which, after being extorted from him by the brigand's threats, had now been given back to his sister by the generous prince, from whose revenues it was originally stolen.

For O'Shea, like a true-hearted Irishman, settled it all on his wife, and the pair lived in clover off the interest.

Clarence Hart and his uncle are both to-day in the Egyptian service as Kahvah Pasha and Hart Bey, and since the marriage of the former to the Princess Melapetros, the duke has been getting restless, and threatens to go to Vienna and marry some German princess.

As for Helen Hart she has long since, in her happy union with Clarence, forgotten most of her troubles; and Owen, who is now Lord Loughborough, by the death of his consumptive uncle, has left the navy and lives on his estates.

THE END.

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